ESSAYS,

MORAL AND LITERARY.

BY

VICESIMUS KNOX, D.D.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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ESSAYS,

MORAL AND LITERARY.

NO. LVI.—HINTS TO THOSE WHO ARE DESIGNED FOR A MERCANTILE LIFE.

It is no wonder that many fail in their employments and professions, when it is considered by what slender and childish motives they are often fixed in the pursuit which is to continue for life. One boy admires a red coat and a cockade, or a pair of trowsers and a jacket, and therefore he will be a soldier or a sailor. Another thinks it cannot but be a perpetual source of happiness to live amongst a profusion of plums and sugar, and therefore he will be a grocer. An early and accidental association of ideas is formed, by which happiness is united with some peculiar mode of life; and a choice is made before reason or experience can possibly have suggested a cause for judicious preference.

The choice of boys at an early age is certainly too ill-founded to direct their parents in fixing their future mode of life. What success can be expected in a plan of conduct which originates in the whim of an infant? A parent, therefore, must study the disposition of his child, and endeavour to conform it to that profession or trade to which he has the best opportunity of introducing him with advantage. The young mind may be moulded like wax, with a due degree of skill, to almost any figure.

In an insular country like ours, where a great part of the commodities consumed by the people are imported, trade must of necessity constitute the employment of the majority. I consider it, therefore, of very great consequence that particular instructions should be adapted to young persons, whose lives are to be spent in the engagements of commerce. They are usually fixed at the desk and the counter at so early an age, as almost to exclude all instruction but that which relates to the confined views of one particular occupation. Were I to offer advice to a young man intended for the commercial walk, I would address him in a manner somewhat similar to the following. It is impossible that what I say should be exactly accommodated to all circumstances and situations; but yet it may suggest to all, such hints as are capable of improvement and particular application.

"The wisdom of our ancestors has prescribed, that seven years shall be spent in learning the exercise of a trade or a mechanical art. This, like many other of their institutions which the vanity of the present age is apt to despise, is founded on substantial reasons. Supposing you to begin at fourteen, seven years bring you to the age of twenty-one; a period at which it is quite early enough to assume the liberty of manhood. Nor, indeed, can those habits be formed with certainty which are to continue during life in a shorter space.

"Seven years, however, it must be confessed, are a very considerable portion of life at any age, and particularly valuable in the vernal season, when the seeds of every amiable and useful quality are to be sown and cultivated. You will, therefore, be particularly careful to employ it in a constant application to useful pursuits.

"The knowledge of your particular business will

claim, after your moral and religious duties, your first and longest attention. Be not afraid of incurring among your companions the appellation of a dull cit or a spiritless plodder. Such names are usually the poor consolations of those who envy the happiness which must attend the propriety of your conduct. Proceed, therefore, in the regular performance of your duties, animated by the approbation of your own heart, and of your friends and superintendants, and despising that ridicule which originates only in malice, though it has been sufficiently powerful to ruin many. I need not inform you, that writing, arithmetic, book-keeping, and all the particular mysteries, as they are called, of your particular occupation, will leave you little time for inaction. The less, indeed, the better. Vice and misery are almost the certain consequences of your not knowing how to employ your time. Great cities, where commerce is chiefly carried on, abound with temptations, and few are found more frequently in the haunts of debauchery and dissipation than clerks and apprentices.

"Since, however, it is impossible but that you should have some leisure, I very seriously recommend it to you to acquire a taste for good books; I say, good books, for you may injure your mind, and ruin your fortune, by an indiscriminate and improper choice. The readers in your way of life seldom read any thing but novels, plays, and licentious productions of every species. Besides that these have a tendency to corrupt the morals of young men in general, they have usually an influence peculiarly hurtful on the mind of the young trader; for they almost invariably represent the essential virtues of a trader, such as honesty, sobriety, punctuality, and industry, as contemptible and ridiculous. The very name and character of a trader, in plays and

novels, are low and vulgar. The object held out as a model for imitation is usually some dissipated rake, who, with every vice and unfortunate failing which tends to make himself miserable, and to break a parent's heart, is described as a fine fellow, worthy of universal love and admiration.

Let me entreat you to summon resolution enough to avoid such reading till your judgement is mature, your passions regulated, and your principles formed. If you have been fortunate enough to have acquired a little knowledge of the classics at your school, preserve and improve it. Read and reflect upon the histories of Greece, Rome, and your own country. There are books of morality in the English language as full of entertainment for a mind unvitiated as any novel.

" A taste for good books will have a happy influence on your temper, and will tend to secure your conduct, not only by filling up your time innocently, but by suggesting to your mind wise rules and useful maxims. Good books will teach you to know yourself and your situation, and to set a just value on those things which ignorant avarice and ambition pursue with restless avidity, and at the same time with little pure and solid enjoyment. They will enlarge your views, and give you a liberality of sentiment and manners. If you attend solely to the means of getting money, your mind will gradually become narrow. You will consider money as the only good. Your eyes and your heart will be shut to all those other objects of delight with which the God of nature has profusely furnished the residence of his favourite creature. This is an enlightened age; and the man of fortune, but of illiberal mind, will be pitied, if not despised and neglected. He will find few associates but among those who are as vulgar as himself, and whose

riches, if they possess riches, cannot render them respectable.

"But moderation is necessary in that which is laudable; and while I recommend to you an attention to letters, I must remind you, that they are only to form your recreation, and not your business. Be contented with reading: beware of scribbling verses when you ought to be posting your accounts. A little applause bestowed on your rhymes may be your ruin. It may give your ambition a wrong object, and lead you astray, like the dancing vapour of a misty evening. Be cautious of raising your ideas above your situation. Dare to be what you really are; and, if you think your situation and character require to be elevated and adorned, elevate and adorn them yourself by exemplary behaviour. If you wish to become respectable, you will succeed in your wish, by raising the sphere in which you are placed, but not by showing that you think it too humble for a person of your exalted ideas and *noble way of thinking.*

"You must beware of entertaining too early the fatal affectation of shining as a fine gentleman and a man of pleasure. To support these characters, supposing them consistent with innocence, a fund of money is absolutely necessary. Probably it can be procured only by importuning and offending a parent, by incurring debt, or by fraudulent practices; each of which methods is almost a certain source of ruin and infamy. Add to this, that he who is always adorning his person, and frequenting theatres, assemblies, and public gardens, will be so overrun with folly and vanity, that no room will be left for the solid virtues of the sober citizen. His ambition will take a new turn. Before the expiration of his apprenticeship, he will probably grow sick of his trade, get an ensigncy, if his father can

afford to purchase one, and, if not, turn strolling player; and, at last, instead of becoming an alderman, or a respectable private citizen, degenerate to an infamous swindler, or become at last a beggar.

"I consider the manner in which a Sunday is spent in a great city, by the young men who are trained to trade and merchandise, as a matter of the highest consequence to their happiness. The master and mistress of the family are then usually at their country-house, or engaged in some rural excursion. There is no restraint and no amusement at home. The apprentice or clerk is glad to make use of his liberty, and to fly from the solitude of a deserted house. Parties of pleasure are formed; improper and even vicious connexions made; and the poor young man often dates his greatest misfortunes from that day, the institution of which was designed to increase the virtue and happiness of mankind. Part of the day may be very reasonably and usefully devoted to innocent relaxation; but let that part consist of the intervals between divine service, or of that which remains at its conclusion.—Sunday affords a fine opportunity for indulging an inclination for reading; and I have no doubt, but that, in a few hours spent in this decent and profitable manner, there would be more pleasure than in galloping along Rotten-row, or driving a curricle to Richmond or to Windsor.

"I have been thus particular in suggesting advice to you for the conduct of an apprenticeship, because good conduct during that dangerous period, is a very promising presage of future success. I make use of the word apprenticeship, though I know that many are introduced to the superior houses of merchandise without the form of indentures, and without a limited term of preparation.

But whatever time is spent in preparation, and whether it is spent at the counter or at the desk, the hints which I have thrown out may, I hope, be sometimes serviceable. If they save but one out of a thousand from ruin or injury, I shall be amply repaid for the trouble of my admonition.

"I will add but one more rule, and that shall be a general one. Learn to place a due value on the plain and homely qualities of common honesty, punctuality, diligence, and œconomy. Were these pursued with half the ardour with which the graces are courted and the vices adopted, there would be fewer bankrupts than there are, notwithstanding the taxes. Bad times are, indeed, injurious to commerce, and so also are bad manners in the conductors of it. When both are combined in a remarkable degree, it is not to be wondered that there are complainings in our streets.

"With a mind enlightened and enlarged by proper education, and a heart furnished with sound principles, if you have fair opportunities, you will not often fail. You will probably rise to that honourable character, a British merchant, who has acquired opulence with unimpeached credit, and who is able to enjoy and adorn it with a noble liberality."

NO. LVII.—ON THE SELFISHNESS OF MEN OF THE WORLD.

THE professed students of the art of pleasing as taught in the Chesterfieldian system, usually possess some qualities which, when seen in their true light, and without the varnish of deceit, are peculiarly unpleasing and extremely offensive. Indeed,

the very motive which urges them to study this celebrated art is in itself most odious, as it consists of a desire to serve themselves alone, at the expense of every virtue connected with sincerity, and by making those the dupes of their artifice whose honesty has rendered them no less unsuspecting than amiable.

We all love ourselves, indeed, sufficiently well; but he who labours indiscriminately to please by obsequiousness and plausibility every one with whom he converses, however paradoxical the assertion may appear, is usually of all men the most selfish. A sincerely good and benevolent man will study to serve and to please men in proportion as they may deserve his attention, and as they may be pleased and served consistently with truth and honesty. He will be the friend of individuals; but always more a friend to truth than to any particular man. He will study to please where he can do it without deceit, and without meanly sacrificing the liberty of a man, and accommodating his own opinions to the opinions of any company to which chance may introduce him. But the mere man of this world has learned to consider truth and sincerity as words only; such, indeed, as may, on some occasions, facilitate the practice of his art, but must never injure what is superior in his idea to all considerations, his own interest.

This sort of persons whom I now stigmatize, is skilled to assume the appearance of all virtues and all good qualities; but their favourite mask is universal benevolence. And the reason why they prefer this disguise to all others is, that it tends most effectually to conceal its opposite, which is, indeed, their true character, universal selfishness, or indifference to the happiness of all around them.

It is a maxim with them, that, as there is no in-

dividual who may not, in the vicissitudes of human affairs, have an opportunity of serving or injuring them, there is none whose favour they ought not to court. They are, therefore, universally and indiscriminately affable and obliging. So condescending are they, that one would almost imagine them to be totally exempt from pride; but after they have treated you with the most insinuating familiarity, should you happen to meet them in the company of your superiors, it is probable they will not know you; and, if you venture to accost them, will beg the favour of your name. When they have any boon to ask of you, or are accidentally in company where you happen to be the principal person, they admire, flatter, and show you all possible attention; but meet them soon afterwards at a public place of resort arm in arm with a lord, and they will pass close by and never see you. They either look straight forwards, or they are engaged in laughing at my lord's jest, or they really forget you. Whatever is the cause, their hats remain on their heads, and you endeavour to catch their eye in vain. You then begin to see that these prodigiously agreeable, affable, clever, obliging gentlemen, are no more than mean, unprincipled, selfish sycophants and parasites.

If you were to judge of them by their dress, appearance, equipage, and conversation, you would imagine these agreeable men to be generous, as well as agreeable. But, in truth, their generosity extends only to themselves, and their expenses consist chiefly in providing matters of external ostentation. These they find conducive to the great end in view, which is to attract notice, and make advantageous connexions. After all their boasts, they are usually hard and extortionate in their bargains with the honest tradesmen who supply necessaries;

they seldom hesitate at any mode of getting or saving money while it can be kept clandestine; and, though they are profuse at a watering-place, they are often contemptibly penurious among their poor neighbours, and remarkably frugal at their own tables. They play at cards, at which they are great adepts, and, therefore, prodigiously clever and agreeable men; but, though they declare the contrary, they play for gain rather than diversion. With all their vanity, love of show, love of pleasure, and love of dissipation, they are also most powerfully actuated by the love of money.

Self-regard, indeed, is evidently the principle of all their conduct. They appear in their own eyes of vast magnitude, and consider the rest of mankind as instruments, which they may manage, with a little cunning, so as to render them subservient to their own pleasure or their own profit. They do, indeed, too often succeed, and raise themselves to fortunes and reputation by deluding the simple and inconsiderate. They are, therefore, often admired as truly wise, and not unfrequently pointed out as models for imitation.

But I cannot help thinking, that, however they are admired, and whatever success they may obtain, they are both despicable and unhappy. By servilely cringing to all, and especially to the great, without in the least attending to personal deserts and characters, they render themselves, in effect, absolute slaves, and their minds soon contract all the meanness and cowardice of slavery. Such meanness is certainly contemptible; nor can I conceive that such slavery, with any fortune or connexions whatever, can by any means be capable of manly enjoyment. Liberty, independence, and a consciousness of having acted uprightly, will render a state of indigence sweet, and the want of them

must imbitter the envied blessings of rank and opulence. Providence has, indeed, so ordered it, for the sake of promoting the important ends of society, that they who live to self-interest and self-love, exclusively of all social regards, should be disappointed in their purposes. Immoderate selfishness, like all other greedy dispositions, sacrifices the present for that future enjoyment which never comes to mortal man. But the selfishness of the mere man of the world has this aggravation, that it leads to the neglect of some of the most amiable virtues, and sometimes to the commission of crimes of the blackest dye. So that the character I have delineated is incompatible with a good conscience; and without a good conscience what a phantom is all human bliss! After all the triumphs of worldly wisdom, and the contempt in which simplicity is held, I am convinced, that it is far better to be the deceived than the deceivers.

At the same time, it is certainly right to warn young men of the deceits of the world, and teach them not rashly to believe those characters the most excellent which appear the most specious and plausible. I would briefly advise them, whenever they see a man remarkably studious of external appearances, devoted to the graces of dress and address, pretending great friendship and regard for persons he never saw before, promising liberally, perpetually smiling, and *always agreeable*—to beware of counterfeits, for such are abroad.

NO. LVIII.—ON THE FAULTS AND BEAUTIES OF HOMER.

CRITICISM has been often employed in illustrating the beauties of authors who need not the illustration. The excellent productions of genius are immediately felt by all who possess sensibility. To those who do not, it is to little purpose that such elucidations are addressed. Writers who copy from nature will find admirers among those to whom nature has given the noble privilege of feeling all that is capable of affecting humanity, and will readily forego the attention of readers who must be taught by the instructions of art to understand those excellencies which were formed to be felt and tasted, loved and admired.

In reading Homer, every sensible mind feels itself animated with a warmth approaching to enthusiasm. A vivacity of expression, a sonorous language, an undescribable fire, the very essence of genius, rouse and gratify all the nobler affections of the human breast. A sweet simplicity at times calls forth the milder emotions of love and esteem, while the more elevated passages produce the just effect of real sublimity.

Such is the sympathetic glow which the reader acquires in the perusal of Homer, that he forgets those defects which are discoverable by a very small share of critical sagacity. The constant recurrence of the same epithets, and the repetition of the same lines, however they may be palliated by the undistinguishing partiality of editors and translators, are certainly faults. They proceeded from a carelessness, perhaps an indolence, which, indeed, is easily pardoned in genius; but at the same time it must be

remembered, that what admits of pardon must be blameable.

The illustrators of this mighty genius have incurred just ridicule in pointing out beauties never intended, and in refining even blemishes into becoming graces. It is a truth confirmed by daily experience, that an object which has once fixed the affection blinds the judgement. Thus it happens in common life; thus too in the arts. Horace was a man of a truly elegant taste, and no blind admirer. He has ventured to pronounce, that Homer sometimes nods; a truth which his bigoted readers are unwilling to allow. Homer's most tedious repetitions, and his coarsest language, are represented as the effects of that simplicity, which, when it is genuine, is allowed to be his characteristical excellence. But they are surely inadequate judges of the merit of compositions, who know not to discriminate between carelessness or rudeness and elegant simplicity.

From the reluctance which the admirers of Homer have always shown to confess the obvious faults of his productions, it might perhaps have been concluded, that his beauties were too few to admit the avowal of a partial deformity. Yet the truth is, that, with all his imperfections on his head, he deserves that admiration which has been lavishly paid to him by the general voice of mankind. His spots, like those of the sun, to use a common similitude, are lost in surrounding effulgence.

Every part of the Iliad glows with life; and none but such as are totally devoid of that genius with which it abounds can pause long enough to be disgusted with minuter defects, occasioned by an attention to beauties. Zoilus deserved his fate. He attended only to the defects of Homer; but his fate has frightened succeeding critics, and induced them

to deny the existence of defects in the poet whom they admired.

I repeat, that criticism is seldom so idly employed as when it is pointing out the beauties of a work of superior and acknowledged genius, like that of Homer. Such genius carries its own radiant light with it. It makes itself felt by its native force, and bears all before it by an irresistible momentum.

The experience of ages has proved, that the excellencies of Homer possess power over the human heart which might be almost called magical. His works have been wandering up and down the world during a longer period than those of any profane writer of equal authenticity. Yet are there no books which have come down to us with so little injury from the hand of time. Very few interpolations, and no chasms, are to be found in him. The cause of his coming down to us in a state so perfect, is indisputably, that he was always the object of general attention; that his verses were not only in the libraries, but in the hands, in the memories, and in the mouths of all who possessed a taste for poetry, and enjoyed leisure and opportunities for its gratification.

In what consists this irresistible charm of Homer's writing, this all-powerful influence? It is unquestionably a combination of all the fine qualities which genius can infuse; and among these, if I may venture to advance the opinion, the diction is not the least. The sound, in the style of Homer, is every where an echo to the sense; the pauses are varied with the nicest judgement, both for the purpose of impressing the idea more forcibly, and of touching the ear with that melody which, when duly produced, is capable of exciting in the mind the liveliest emotions. Milton has left all modern writers far behind him in the judicious variation of his

pauses. Homer excels him and all others. To this unrivalled excellence of a judicious disposition of the pauses, Homer adds such an artful inversion of words, as immediately directs the attention, and fixes the accent on the most important or significant expression in the metrical period. He enjoyed the advantage of a magnificent language, still farther improved by commixture of the Ionic and all the other dialects of Greece. With such materials, and such skill, no wonder he has produced a work which all men of taste, who can read it with facility, read with rapture.

The beauties of language arise from two sources; the selection of words, and their collocation. Many writers have excelled in one of these beauties, and have been totally deficient in the other. Homer has most happily united them, and produced that powerful effect which must ever result from their judicious combination.

To enlarge on the excellencies of Homer, after the repeated illustrations and remarks of the most ingenious critics, seems superfluous. He has been the idol of kingdoms, the favourite of princes; and all antiquity has been unanimous in his praise. The moderns have, for the most part, fully entered into the feelings of the ancients, have acknowledged the justness of all the eulogia of Homer, and have added to the general acclamation. But though this be true, yet it is no less certain, that in these times, and in some countries on the Continent, an attention to Homer has been discouraged by those to whom fashion has given influence. His manners, his sentiments, his language, have been stigmatized by the admirers of French refinement, as coarse and vulgar. Chesterfield has called his language porter-like. The veneration in which he has ever been held is insolently attributed to that prejudice by

which superficial pretenders are disposed to account for all the best and most amiable notions which the world has long adopted in morals, in religion, and in literature.

It must not be deemed a judgement too severe, when we venture to suggest, that the modern Zoili often condemn that which they do not understand. It is probable that many of them have never read Homer but in their own languages. It is certain that some of the severest of them have read him only in those literal Latin interpretations which are usually subjoined in the common editions. From such poor representations they can scarcely have a juster idea of the great Mæonian than of the immense ocean from the view of a canal.

It is not to be doubted but that many who are disqualified for judging, both by the deficiency of their education and their idleness, frequently labour to bring into disrepute those studies, and those authors, with the nature and excellence of which they are totally unacquainted. By dint of effrontery and artifice they often succeed. But liberal scholars must wish, without any view to interest, that their attainments may be justly appreciated by their contemporaries, and will therefore exert themselves to counteract the disingenuous attempts of those who endeavour to lower them, and their pursuits, in the eyes of the injudicious and uninstructed.

NO. LIX.—ON THE CELEBRATED HISTORIAN THUANUS, OR DE THOU.

The history composed by this illustrious writer includes a period of sixty-three years, beginning

about the middle of the sixteenth century, and closing at the commencement of the seventeenth.

Though his life was active, for he was president of the parliament of Paris, yet he found time and attention to write a very voluminous and circumstantial history. He adds to the number of those examples which tend to prove, that a contemplative is compatible with a busy life. Many of the most eminent writers have been engaged in public employments, have spent a great portion of their lives in voyages and travels undertaken on political affairs, and have only possessed that time for literary pursuits which they snatched from the anxious concerns of the cabinet and the field. Grotius, in an epistle to Thuanus, expresses a great degree of surprise, that the historian was able to compose such a work amidst a variety of public business. Thuanus might have expressed a reciprocal astonishment; for the very learned and voluminous Grotius was engaged in public life, and sent by the court of Sweden ambassador to France. The powers of the human mind are, indeed, capable of an extension beyond what it is easy to conceive; and he who is impelled by necessity to exert himself strenuously and steadily, will soon be surprised at his own advancement. In a life of action and public employment, a thousand incitements arise which the solitary student never feels. The love of praise, the fear of disgrace, the presence of witnesses, the glow excited by strenuous exertion, call forth all the latent energies of the soul, and stimulate it to achieve the most honourable undertakings. But diffidence, dejection of spirits, and habitual indolence, often preclude every efficient exertion of the sedentary student, who lives and dies in the recesses of a library.

The history of Thuanus excites a great share of respect immediately on entering on the perusal

of it. The solemn declaration in which he calls God and men to witness, that he wrote his history for the glory of God, and the good of mankind, without resentment or partiality; the strong and repeated protestations that truth is his only guide, warmly interest the reader in his favour, and open his mind for the reception of all that follows. The very serious prayer which closes the first book, displays a venerable appearance of sincerity and dignity; and there is every reason to believe, that it proceeded from a mind sincerely pious, and firmly resolved to propagate the truth, and the truth only, as far as human sagacity could develope it.

The style of Thuanus has always been admired for its perspicuity, except in its proper names. It is also, in its general tenour, truly elegant. It would have been uniformly beautiful, if the great author had given himself the trouble to express the materials which he received from others in his own diction. Perhaps it arose from modesty, and perhaps from indolence, that he inserted the recitals which he received from his correspondents, or extracted from books, nearly in the words in which he found them. That part of his history which relates to his own country is allowed to be the best. The cause is obvious. The matter and the words were entirely his own. But though the accounts which he received from others are in a style unequal to the compiler's, yet they are not barbarous. Fortunately, he wrote at a time when the Latin was cultivated by all the scholars in Europe with indefatigable diligence. In the *Mélanges d'Histoire de Literature*, which pass under the name of M. de Vigneul Marville, but which were written by D'Argonne, Thuanus is called the Livy of France; and the purity and eloquence of his style are said to place him on a level with the best historians of Rome. National parti-

ality may, perhaps, lead an ingenious critic to exaggerate the praises of his countrymen; but it is certain, that if Thuanus does not equal, he approaches, in the excellence of his style, in dignity, and in copiousness, the best models of antiquity.

One circumstance has contributed to diminish the graces of his style, which he could not well avoid. Modern names of places and persons must abound in a work of this kind. But modern names have in general a barbarous sound in a work written in Latin. They are, in truth, scarcely tolerable. Thuanus was sensible of it, and has, therefore, latinized them. Yet they still retain something of their uncouth sound, and, what is worse, have so far affected the remarkable perspicuity of the work, as to have rendered it almost unintelligible to the greater part of its readers, without a perpetual glossary. Thuanus did right in latinizing the names, but he has taken too great liberties. He has totally disguised them. Who but an Œdipus could discern that Quadrigarius was the Latin name of Chartier, or Interamnas of Entragues? Desmarets is translated Paludanus; Dubois, Sylvius; le Sieur de Selves, Forestes. D'Argonne asserts, that our historian has rendered the proper name Joly by the Latin Lepidus; but the editors observe, that it is without foundation. The editors of the last fine edition have taken care to subjoin in the margin the modern names of persons and places with great fidelity; but still it is unpleasant to be often interrupted in the warmth of attention by recurring to a glossary.

All laudable predilections have been carried too far. Thus the preference for the ancients, which is undoubtedly well founded, has led many modern writers, especially those who flourished at the revival of learning, to change their Gothic names into words

which had some resemblance to Roman appellations, but which, at the same time, were neither Roman nor Gothic, and served only to disguise the owners under some barbarous combination of syllables with Latin terminations. The Gothicism of modern names is a great misfortune in the republic of letters: it constitutes a base alloy, which corrupts and sullies the intrinsic beauties of an elegant Latin style. Nevertheless, I would advise all future writers to give the name of a place or person varied only in its termination, if varied at all; for the want of perspicuity is a defect which no elegance can compensate.

NO. LX.—ON OWEN, THE LATIN EPIGRAMMATIST.

However absurd the taste of any age may be, writers of true genius will sometimes find means to render themselves conformable to it, and, at the same time, to claim the attention of a more enlightened period. Great ingenuity, though injudiciously and trivially employed, will ever excite the curiosity of readers who love to observe the operation of the human faculties under the influence of the various modes of judging and writing, which, at different periods, have prevailed in the world of letters.

In the age in which Joannes Audoenus, or John Owen, was born, the lower kinds of wit were universally relished. Puns, conceits, and a wretched species of epigrams, had totally superseded that unaffected mode of expression which nature dictates, and which cannot fail to please when nature is allowed to form her own judgement, unseduced by bad example and authority. Though the taste for epigrams was universal, unfortunately the general

choice did not fall on Martial's manner as a model. Classical expression was little studied. Any words which conveyed the idea with tolerable precision, and which, in point of quantity, were admissible into an hexameter or pentameter verse, were sure of reception. It must, indeed, be owned, that a very scrupulous attention was not always paid even to quantity. Upon the whole, it is certain, that he who has formed himself upon classical models will often be disgusted with the expressions of Owen and his coeval writers, at the same time that he is surprised and pleased by their wit and jocularity. He will find many thoughts which, in the management of a Martial, would have constituted epigrams of uncommon excellence, but which, like a fine portrait in modern drapery, have lost all freedom and grace by the Gothicism of their diction.

The epigrams of Owen are numerous, and nearly amount to two thousand. In such a number, it is to be concluded from experience that some will be good, others moderate, and the greater part of little or no merit. The great critic Rapin has said, that it is sufficient to have written one good epigram in the course of a life. His idea of a good epigram was, perhaps, too exalted. Owen has written many epigrams which please and satisfy the most judicious reader, and which, therefore, must be allowed to deserve the appellation of good. There is a great abundance of ingenious thoughts in every part of his little volume, and there is an ease of versification, acquired and confirmed by long habit, which, in some degree, conceals the defect of unclassical language. There are also a few epigrams, which are not defective in the beauties of style.

The epigrams of Owen were much read in his own and the succeeding age, and have, in the present times, afforded amusement to the polite scholar,

though they have not met with general attention. The neglect with which they have been received is to be attributed to the contempt thrown upon epigrammatic wit by writers of distinguished taste, who, while they justly attempted to explode a false kind of witticism, consisting of puns and miserable conceits, involved this species of composition, which at that time had, indeed, greatly degenerated from its original grace, in a general and undeserved censure.

Inscriptions, for such are epigrams according to the original meaning, are by no means in their own nature a contemptible species of composition. Prefixed to statues, public buildings, sepulchral monuments or books, and applied to great characters and on great occasions, they often reflect honour not only on their composers, but on nations and on princes. They are capable of the most elevated sublimity, as well as the most polished elegance of refined wit. From their conciseness and brevity they are easily comprehended and retained; and there are few scholars who have not committed to memory some favourite epigrams, which have struck them with their pointed wit and beauty. Yet, at the same time, I have observed, that it is not agreeable to read a great collection of epigrams with an unsuspended attention. The necessary want of connexion, and the continual efforts of wit, soon fatigue the mind, which, though, like the palate, it may occasionally delight in dainties, requires that its constant food should be plain and natural.

For the want of decency in some of Owen's compositions no apology can be offered. The taste of those readers must be gross, indeed, to whom indelicacy is humour, and obscenity wit. It may, however, be considered, that poets have at all times deemed themselves under an obligation to comply

with the taste of their age, and that the age of Owen was not much refined. It was an heroic and a learned age; but it was not distinguished for delicacy.

The licentiousness of some of his works injured the poet's fortune; for Anthony Wood informs us, that Owen, distressed as he was by poverty, the epidemical disease of poets, was disappointed in the expectation of riches at the death of a wealthy uncle, who disinherited him for some of his poetry; a misfortune which several of the unthrifty followers of the muses have rashly incurred.

With all the faults of Owen, such has been the sterility of epigrammatic genius in our country, that he may still retain the title, which he has acquired among foreigners, of the British Martial; but, as both he and Martial have disgraced epigrammatic composition by gross obscenity, they might both be thrown into the gulf of oblivion with very little detriment to letters and great advantage to morals. The selection of Martial's Epigrams for the use of schools, contains all that ought to be preserved of that abominable poetaster.

NO. LXI.—ON POLITIAN AND MURETUS, TWO ELEGANT WRITERS OF MODERN LATIN. [IN A LETTER IN ANSWER TO INQUIRIES CONCERNING THEIR CHARACTERS.]

One of the brightest luminaries which shone forth at the revival of learning was Politian. A slight knowledge of the Greek was in his age a great and rare attainment. He not only understood the language so as to read it, but to compose in it. As a grammarian, as an orator, as a poet, he has been an

object of general admiration. Genius he undoubtedly possessed in a degree superior to the laborious scholars of his times; but his poetry is, notwithstanding, greatly defective. In fire he abounds; but he is wanting in judgement and in art. There are many fine lines in his Rusticus; and the diction is throughout remarkably splendid, though not always purely classical. The Latin poets of this period were not, indeed, so careful of the classical purity of their style as of harmony and brilliancy. Several of the poems of Politian are florid to excess, and far beyond that boundary which Augustan taste so finely delineates.

When we consider the state of literature at this early season, we must allow that great applause which has been paid to such writers as Politian justly due. They were under the necessity of breaking through a thick cloud of ignorance; and they had to contend with the rude taste of their age before their writings could gain attention. Under every difficulty, they arrived, by the extraordinary efforts of emulation and genius, at a degree of excellence which greatly resembled that of the models selected by them for imitation.

The Greek verses which he wrote at a very early age are highly commended. He prefixed the age at which he wrote them. Scaliger says he need not have done this; for they are so excellent, that even his Latin verses, which he wrote when a man, are by no means equal to his juvenile compositions in the Greek language.

The Letters of Politian are indisputably elegant; but they are not without their faults. The style is sometimes too elevated and oratorical. For the sake of introducing a favourite phrase, he often goes too far out of his way, and overburthens the sense and the expression by a redundancy of words.

With all his faults, I must confess I have read him with great pleasure. There is a charm in true genius which compensates defects, and often conceals them.

Politian's real name was Bassus. The adoption of names entirely new, was, at one time, not uncommon. Thus the real name of Erasmus was Gerard. There was, perhaps, some degree of blameable ostentation in assuming the appellations of Desiderius and Erasmus, both of which, according to their respective etymology, signify the amiable or the desirable. Politian's adopted name was also chosen with a view to convey a favourable idea of his character. It is not improbable that it was thought to express, what, indeed, its derivation may intimate, a *polished* taste and understanding.

It is remarkable of Muretus, another elegant Latinist of modern ages, that he acquired a perfect knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages, in the latter of which he wrote most elegantly, without an instructor.

He composed various critical and poetical works; but his orations have always been celebrated as his best productions. They are, indeed, formed on the pattern of Cicero; they are written in a rapid and flowing style, and are not destitute of judicious observations. But, with respect to his diction, it must be said of him, that he is less careful in the selection than in the disposition of words. This defect arose from a blameable precipitation, of which authors have sometimes been vain.

We are told that Muretus never transcribed any of his writings; that he scarcely ever read his productions twice; that he seldom made a change or interpolation, and still less frequently a blot. This may account for his faults, but it cannot excuse them. It is an insult on mankind to present them

with a work less perfect than the author might have rendered it. Haste and carelessness have often been avowed by writers who wished to exalt the general opinion of their abilities; but they have usually, and as they deserved, lost that lasting and undiminished reputation which they might have enjoyed. While an author lives, prejudice and party may support his fame; but when he is dead, these soon subside, and his real merit alone can preserve him from oblivion. Muretus has been justly and severely censured for having bestowed praises on the execrable massacre at Paris on St. Bartholomew's day.

He imitates Cicero; but, like a servile imitator, he imitates that which was least beautiful in his model. The very diffuse style of the Roman is still more diffuse in the orations of Muretus. The Asiatic manner, even in its best state, is not agreeable to a correct taste. It prevented the works of the greatest orator whom the world ever saw from being universally admired; and, when it is presented to the reader with aggravated deformity, it can scarcely be rendered tolerable by any concomitant beauties.

The Epistles of Muretus, though often elegant, are improperly written in the oratorical rather than in the epistolary style. He seems to have studied and admired the Orations of Cicero more than his Epistles.

Muretus has been greatly commended for his poetry. Scævola Sammarthanus says of him, that Catullus is not more like himself than he to Catullus. I have not been able to discover any peculiar grace, either of sentiment or style, in the few little poems which remain on sacred subjects. But there are several on other occasions which are very pleasing, and far surpass, in classical purity and in sentiment, most of the Latin compositions of the age of Muretus. In the very pretty epitaph on

Raphael there is a manifest impropriety in representing the painter as praising himself in the highest style of commendation.

The verses entitled Tibur are pleasing. The prologue to Terence's Phormio is easy and elegant. The Institutio Puerilis was intended to be no more than useful. The whole collection will furnish entertainment to him who has formed a taste for modern as well as ancient Latin poetry. Catullus and Tibullus were evidently his patterns; but Rapin thinks, that by an excessive affectation of fine latinity, his odes are rendered stiff and unnatural.

It is true that there are many succeeding writers who have excelled Muretus both in verse and prose; but his real excellencies, and the great reputation he has possessed, will justly render him an object of attention to him who, from his love of letters, becomes interested in the works of all who have contributed to advance their progress.

NO. LXII.—ON THE LATIN POET VIDA. [IN A LETTER IN ANSWER TO INQUIRIES CONCERNING HIS CHARACTER.]

Vida was born at Cremona, a city in Italy, at no great distance from the birth-place of the poet whom he imitated. As a reward for his ingenious labours, the pope gave him the bishopric of Alba. He died at the age of fifty-nine, in the year 1566.

There is, perhaps, no modern Latin poet more celebrated than Vida. He is justly recorded by the great De Thou as one of the first among the Italians who applied poetry to sacred subjects. He adds, that he adorned this province with pure and elegant verse. This praise is certainly due to him; but

some of the more zealous religionists seem to have endeavoured to recommend his sacred poems as the best of his works. Even Scaliger, who censures his hymns as puerile, asserts that his Christiad deserves the highest praise. The truth is, that his Christiad is the worst of his greater works. He was sensible of it. He entered upon it with reluctance, and apologized for its defects with great diffidence, in an inscription subjoined to the poem. He speaks very modestly of his performance in his epistle to Botta, and seems desirous that his friends and all the world should know that he undertook so arduous a task solely with a view to show his gratitude in obeying his patrons. Besides many dull and heavy passages, which must occur to every reader, it is certain that the poem falls short of the dignity of its subject in almost every part. Among other faults, the critics have observed that Vida has put into the mouths of Joseph and St. John two speeches as long as those of Æneas to Dido, to be uttered while Jesus Christ was conveyed to the tribunal of Pilate. It is not to be supposed, say they, that the president of the council could have time or patience, in the midst of a tumult, to attend to a long recital of all the particulars of the birth, education, and actions of our Saviour; besides that St. John is introduced explaining matters, of which himself could have no certain knowledge till after the day of Pentecost.

But it is not pleasant to dwell on the enumeration of defects. Almost every writer of genius has been sometimes led to compose against his inclination. The advice and importunity of friends, or the necessities of particular situations and emergencies, have called forth a task at a time when the fine impulses of genius have lain dormant. And it may be remarked, to the honour of Vida, that his most unpoetical works do credit to his heart and to his

piety. This cannot be said of the trivial writings of many of our most celebrated authors, which have sometimes deviated not only into absurdity, but likewise into immorality.

Vida himself, were he alive, would probably choose his three books of Poetics, his Bombyces, and his Scacchia, to form the basis of his reputation. These certainly possess a portion of Virgilian beauty.—Though it is but a small portion, it diffuses a lustre which attracts and detains the notice of the classical reader. He undoubtedly practised the precept which he has given in his Poetics, of making Virgil the only object of imitation.

It is certainly of great consequence to the student who wishes to acquire the style of a particular author, not to distract his attention by the perusal of many others. Vida, though successful in his imitation, furnishes an additional proof how difficult it is for the moderns to contend with the ancients. He has many verses interspersed, which Virgil would not be ashamed to own; but he does not support that dignified uniformity of elegance which places the Mantuan in a rank superior to all others in the excellence of correct, delicate, and dignified beauty. The first book contains many sweet passages; particularly agreeable is the description of the marks of a young genius, and its progress in poetical efforts. The whole performance is highly pleasing, contains many useful hints, and deserves the commendations of Pope in the art of criticism.

Modern eclogues in Latin have become too common to attract much notice when they are not remarkably excellent. They have been the trite medium of conveying the complaints of the surviving friend and the desponding lover; and have served also, by a most awkward contrivance, to communicate even political doctrines and ideas. Virgil, it is

true, set the example; and it has been followed by Spenser, and many others, even to a degree of absurdity. Vida's Eclogues, as they are laborious imitations of Virgil's style, have a considerable share of grace and delicacy. The epistle to the celebrated Gibertus is full of tender sentiment, and exhibits that ease of language which proves it to have flowed from the heart.

The Bombyces of Vida, or the art of managing Silk-worms, has the same kind of merit, resulting from a close imitation of Virgil. It exhibits an equable flow of elegant verse, but, I think, presents not any striking passages; though Scaliger says it is the best of all Vida's works. It was a very proper present to a lady, the Marchioness of Mantua, to whom it is dedicated.

It is said, that, by reading the poem called Scacchia, or the Game of Chess, a person may learn to play it with skill. However that may be, the poem has always been admired for its ingenuity and elegance. The game of chess, indeed, the most ancient and the most generally known of all others, deserves attention, were it merely on account of its antiquity and universal acceptance. Montaigne asserts, that it is too serious for a game; and it is certainly consistent with reason that games, which were adopted for recreation, should not require a degree of painful attention.

Vida's odes are pretty, but seem not to rise to any exalted degree of excellence. The Lamentation on the Death of his Parents, William Vida and Leona Oscasala, has many tender and affecting thoughts, which fully prove that it came from the heart. This, and a few other pathetic passages in his poems, evince that he would have excelled in elegiac poetry, if he had chosen to compose it.

Notwithstanding some trifling inequalities, and

many dull passages, where genius seems to be eclipsed by labour, the whole collection does honour to the taste of the poet and his times. It is formed on the best models, and every where displays marks of an amiable disposition, as well as of a poetical and classical talent. It is always benevolent and friendly to virtue; or, as he says himself, his numbers please, if they please at all, without guilt, and without the bitterness of satire.

NO. LXIII.—ON THE LATIN POET SANNAZARIUS. [IN A LETTER.]

About the time at which learning arose, as it were, from the dead, there appeared an illustrious race of writers in Latin verse, whose force of genius, and elegance of language, entitle them to rank among the most celebrated of modern poets, with our Drydens, Priors, Popes, and Parnells.

Parnell, indeed, it is well known, borrowed several of his pieces from the modern Latin poets; and Pope is justly thought to have improved himself by the perusal of them. Pope was so great an admirer of the Italian writers, who had chiefly excelled in Latin poetry, that he published a selection of their detached pieces, in two volumes. There happened, at that time, to prevail a prejudice against modern Latin poetry, occasioned by a capricious censure of it by Boileau, and therefore these volumes were not greatly regarded: but we may readily believe, that a selection conducted by the taste of Pope could not but abound in beauty. His two volumes were, indeed, but an amplification of a small edition published by an anonymous, but very judicious, compiler

and Pope is blamed by a sensible though severe remarker on his life, for omitting the original preface. Its omission is certainly a blemish in Pope's edition of the Selecta Poemata Italorum. The preface of the anonymous editor is, indeed, equally remarkable for its modesty and taste; and I conjecture it to have been the production of some Cambridge student; as the book, though printed in London, was printed at the expense of Cambridge booksellers. The editor makes very short, yet judicious remarks on the several poets who compose his collection, particularly on Sannazarius, Fracastorius, Vida, Politian, and Castiglione. He has placed Sannazarius first in the collection; a rank to which the poet is entitled by his superior merit.

Sannazarius was born at Naples, in the fifteenth century. His singular learning and amiable morals soon introduced him to the court, where, though he was caressed and advanced, he was not allured from polite letters by the temptations either of ambition or of pleasure. He made poetry the elegant employment of his liberal leisure; and, amidst the business and dissipation of a court, produced his admired poem, De Partu Virginis.

This poem is said to have employed its elegant writer no less than twenty years in adding the last polish and improvement. He was one of those writers of exquisite taste who can seldom satisfy their own ideas of excellence. Indeed, I believe, few fine writers please themselves; for they who reach one great height of excellence see their horizon extended as they rise, and consider the ascent which they have already gained as an humble eminence, compared to summits which seem to ascend in perpetual progression, and to elude their most laborious endeavours. Apelles used to say, that Pro-

togenes knew not when to take his hand from the tablet which he was painting; and the same has been said of this artist in a sister art.

Of this poem, though the admirers have been warm and numerous, there have been censurers, whose opinions seem to be just. The style is beautiful, and Virgilian; but the spirit is not always equal to the style. Erasmus acknowledges that he read the poem with pleasure; but at the same time laments, that a sacred subject was not treated more consistently with our ideas of sanctity. Rapin allows that the purity of the style is admirable; but he asserts, that the fable of the piece is destitute of delicacy, and that the manner is by no means adequate to the dignity of the subject. It has also been thought a just cause of reprehension, that, in a sacred poem, he has never mentioned the names of Jesus or of Christ. He was afraid that such names might disgust an ear accustomed to the majestic sounds of the Latin language, and of Virgilian verse. When he is introducing the prophecies which foretold Jesus Christ, he is ashamed to use the names of Isaiah and David, but most ridiculously introduces Proteus singing them in a cave on the banks of the river Jordan.

Sannazarius, indeed, affords an instance, among many others, how difficult it is to succeed in sacred poetry. The poem De Partu Virginis, like the Christiad of Vida, is, notwithstanding the beauties of diction, the worst production of its author. It is the business of poetry to raise things from the low level of reality to all the elevation which fancy and language can bestow; but divine subjects are already so far raised above nature, as not to admit of much poetical exaltation. The attempt has always, except in a few instances, discovered only the impotence and ambition of man. It is like an attempt to

put Ossa on Pelion, in order to invade the skies. A very judicious critic has shown, in some of his prefaces to the English poets, that sacred poetry, when uninspired, can seldom reach exalted excellence.

The most popular of the poems of Sannazarius are his Piscatory Eclogues. Like Pope's pastorals, they were juvenile compositions; and, like them, they may be produced as proofs, that improvement does not always keep pace with progressive years. There is a happiness in native genius, which is sometimes lost, rather than improved, with increasing judgement and experience.

Piscatory eclogues have been attempted by several writers; but they have not been successful. It is, indeed, easy to conjecture why they have not succeeded. Even pastoral poetry is so far removed from reality and nature, that there seems to be little relish remaining among mankind for new works of that species. But we all know, that the manners of those who are engaged in fishing as a trade are even coarser than those of the modern shepherd. To put the elegant language of the Mantuan muse into the mouths of the crew of a fishing-smack, is such a violation of truth and nature, as tends to excite ridicule by its incongruity.

The charms, however, of fine language and melodious verse can almost reconcile us to absurdity of design; and these charms are very conspicuous and captivating in the Eclogues of Sannazarius. Rapin has bestowed great praise upon them; and Scaliger asserts, that they are the only Latin poems of this kind which, after Virgil, are worth perusal. They have, indeed, a very considerable portion of that sweet Virgilian grace which has been so happily characterized in the epithets *molle et facetum*, the tender and the highly finished. It is one of the distinguished excellencies of this poet, that he has,

on all occasions, used the file with great delicacy and attention.

The elegies of Sannazarius are admired for their ease and harmony; and his epigrams have also held a high place among the compositions of modern latinists. It is not consistent with the design of my papers to introduce long citations in the learned languages; and, therefore, I must refer the classical reader to the poems themselves, which are frequently to be found in collections, if not in separate volumes.

I trust, however, I shall want no apology for inserting the following passage relative to Sannazarius, which I have accidentally fallen upon in a critic of our own times of no small reputation.

"I can by no means," says the late philosopher of Salisbury, "omit Sannazarius, whose Eclogues in particular, formed on the plan of a fishing life instead of pastoral, cannot be enough admired both for their latinity and their sentiment. His fourth eclogue, called Proteus, written in imitation of Virgil's eclogue called Silenus, may be justly valued as a master-piece in its kind."

The critic quotes several verses of this piece, and points out peculiar beauties. In a subsequent page, he cites several most beautiful passages from other poems, descriptive of the villa of Sannazarius, at Mergillina. "It would be difficult," he concludes, "to translate these elegant morsels. It is sufficient to express what they mean collectively—that the village of Mergillina had solitary woods; had groves of laurel and citron; had grottoes in the rock, with rivulets and springs; and that, from its lofty situation, it looked down upon the sea, and commanded an extensive prospect.

"It is no wonder that such a villa should enamour such an owner. So strong was his affection for it,

that when, during the subsequent wars in Italy, it was demolished by the Imperial troops, this unfortunate event was supposed to have hastened his end."

He was buried near this delightful spot, the scene of his elegant enjoyments, and near the sweet poet of Mantua, the constant object of his successful imitation. An epitaph was engraved on his tomb, written by Bembo, and expressive of a wish that flowers might arise from the sacred ashes; for that there reposed Sannazarius, next in place as next in genius to Virgil.

I will venture to recommend this poet, and many others of the moderns, to the young or classical scholar; but, at the same time, it is necessary to add a caution:—let original writers be first read; nor let others be attended to till the taste is refined, and the judgement corroborated by the actual contemplation of the finished pieces of the Augustan age. Let Virgil be read almost to satiety before the attention is diverted to the inferior Latin poets of modern times. Many a fine genius has been checked in its career by a too early perusal of writers, who, with all their elegance, are still subordinate, and who frequently are no more than imitators of imitators, a SERVUM PECUS, as Horace justly calls them. When the taste and judgement are once rightly established, they may be finely exercised by sometimes contemplating copies as well as originals. Nor let any student fear to sip at those fountains from which several of our best English poets, Pope in particular, drank most copiously.

NO. LXIV.—ON THE VENERABLE BEDE, AND SEVERAL OTHER EARLY WRITERS OF ENGLAND.

I CANNOT help considering those writers who arrived at distinguished eminence in a dark age as the heroes of literature. In later times, and indeed at present, there are various and powerful incitements to literary ambition. A competent education is become general. Books are easily procured, readers abound, and reputation and gain are the usual effects of remarkable improvement. But to have written much and successfully in the seventh century, is a proof of heroic ardour and undaunted perseverance, such as was not to be cooled by neglect, nor obstructed by difficulty. Books, which must always supply the materials for writing, were at that time difficult to be procured; and after they were procured, and the compositions to which they gave occasion completed, few were capable of reading them, or of bestowing on them that approbation which they justly deserved. It is, indeed, difficult to form an adequate idea of the strength and resolution which, amidst all these discouragements, could confine a student of that period, under so many disadvantages, to the labour of writing, and enable him to succeed in it to the admiration of distant ages.

The venerable Bede stands forth a very illustrious example of piety and literary application. He was born about the middle of the seventh century, at Jarrow, at the mouth of the Tyne, and was early devoted to a monastic life. He confined himself to his solitary cell; and, though he was invited to Italy by the pope, preferred the sweets of liberty and of an unambitious life, which he spent in a regular alternation of prayers and study.

In the third volume of his History, he says of

himself, "When I was seven years old, I was given up by my relations to the very respectable Abbot Benedict, and then to Ceolfred, to be educated by them; and, passing my whole life in the same monastery, I employed myself entirely in meditating on the Scriptures; and amidst the observance of a strict discipline, and the daily business of chanting in the church, I constantly found, in the exercises of learning, of teaching, and of writing, a sweet amusement."

His great work was an Ecclesiastical History; but his miscellaneous productions are almost incredibly numerous. He is said to have been skilled in Greek as well as in Latin; and he distinguished himself by his knowledge in poetry, rhetoric, general history, astronomy, arithmetic, chronology, philosophy, and theology. So great was his character as a theologist, that his homilies were appointed to be read in churches, even while he was alive, by the express order of the bishops. To this circumstance he probably owes the title of Venerable; for, as he was alive, he could not easily be made a saint, and therefore was honoured with an intermediate but most respectable epithet; an epithet significant of the sanctity of his character, which was no less strikingly marked by warmth and sincerity of devotion than by profound erudition.

Bede has not affected elegance of style; but he is not altogether inelegant. He is perspicuous, if he is not pure; and concise and easy, if not full and harmonious. Though he is said to have drawn his learning from the Greek and Latin authors, yet he seems to have attended more to their matter than their manner. He is credulous, and relates the foolish stories of an uncultivated age, as if they were true history. He undoubtedly has some faults of his age, and has been severely censured for them

by Du Pin, D'Argonne, and Milton; but he has been extolled and admired by those whose names, both in number and weight, will be more than equivalent to his detractors; and, take him for all in all, as Shakespeare says, he is one of the most brilliant ornaments of early English literature. His Ecclesiastical History, in five books, was published in the last century at Cambridge, with the Saxon paraphrase of Alfred the Great. His various other works, a catalogue of which would exceed the limits of my paper, are scattered throughout all the most ancient and valuable libraries in the kingdom. Considering the improvements which have been made in the space of a thousand years, they may not probably be very useful, but they are striking and curious examples of early learning and application, under great disadvantages.

Alcuin was the scholar of Bede, and reflects honour on his master. His learning was deep and extensive. He wrote not fewer than fifty treatises on important subjects, and in a style, which, in his age, was not inelegant. He had the singular honour of introducing polite literature into France, whither he was invited by the king, by promoting the establishment of the university of Paris. He is said also to have founded a school at Tours, where he presided as the master; and he refused to leave his employment and institution at the urgent invitation of the emperor Charlemagne.

Joannes Scotus Erigena became a very distinguished scholar in the eighth century. He was most probably a native of Scotland, though England and Ireland have put in their claims to the honour of his birth. He wrote many treatises; but his principal work was his five books on the Division of Nature, printed in the last century at Oxford. He also, like Alcuin, was invited to France by Francis

the Bald, with whom he lived on terms of intimate friendship, and even familiarity. Some of his writings were thought rather injurious to the Roman Catholic religion; and, at the instigation of the pope, he was driven from Paris to his native country. On his return he was assassinated by the monks of Malmsbury, who stabbed him with pen-knives in revenge for the freedom with which he had ventured to reprehend them. Bale relates a circumstance which tends to render this old author remarkable. He tells us that he was the first professor in Oxford, and was appointed to his office by Alfred himself, immediately after that great king had begun the establishment of this famous university.

But I mean not to invade the province of the biographer, nor to engage in literary history beyond the limits which are usually assigned to my circumscribed papers. I have entered on this subject with a view to amuse the young student, and to rouse his diligence by examples of uncommon application and success, under circumstances the most unfavourable. I shall, perhaps, occasionally resume it. I have always taken a particular pleasure in reading anecdotes of the learned: and I cannot help thinking it a pleasure necessarily connected with improvement; for we can scarcely read the accounts of them transmitted to us by critics and biographers, without admiring the many instances of virtue and genius which occur under very unfavourable circumstances, and we insensibly learn to imitate what we habitually admire. As in the arts of painting and sculpture, the best method of facilitating the progress of the artist is to place the finest models constantly in his view, so also in life and in letters it is of the highest importance to point out patterns of that actual excellence which, in our precepts and exhortations, we have previously recommended.

There is no method so successful of displaying the blemishes to be avoided, and the beauties and excellencies which ought to be the objects of pursuit.

NO. LXV.—ON SOME OF THE MOST CELEBRATED SCHOOLMEN.

Every lover of letters will find himself impelled, by curiosity, to inquire into the lives and writings of those scholars who, in any period of literature, have arrived at distinguished reputation. Few have been viewed with greater admiration by the age in which they flourished than the professors of scholastic theology. Scarcely any epithet which language afforded was thought adequate to their exalted merit.

Thomas d'Aquin, or, as he is commonly called, Thomas Aquinas, the angelic doctor, was born at Naples, in the beginning of the thirteenth century. He was early devoted to philosophy and theology; and one of his masters is said to have been a countryman of our own, Alexander ab Ales, the father of the schoolmen, and a *doctor irrefragabilis.* After a virtuous and laborious life spent in an unremitted attention to learning, he died at the age of fifty. He was canonized in 1323, and has been read and admired for ages among a species of congenial scholars, who, in a very peculiar and unfashionable kind of learning, have displayed an astonishing depth and acuteness of intellect. He founded the sect of the Thomists.

Thomas Aquinas stands without a rival at the head of the scholastic theologians. He is called by the Roman catholics the Homer of their theological writers; and, as a philosopher, he acquired uncommon glory by his Comments on Aristotle, whose

works held a place in the esteem of the times at least equal to the Bible. "Nor was he," says Erasmus, "great only in his own age. He exhibited a constancy of application, a soundness of understanding, and a solidity of erudition, which scarcely any of the modern divines have equalled. He has made so excellent an use of the learning then in vogue, that one cannot help lamenting that he enjoyed not the advantages of the learned languages, and the other materials of politer literature." Had Aquinas been born two centuries later, there is scarcely any work which we might not have expected, in polite and solid literature, from such activity, combined with force, subtilty, and penetration unrivalled.

His works, together with his life, and the notes of the editors, make up no less than eighteen volumes in folio, and they were printed in 1594, at Venice.

Thomas Aquinas has been introduced to the notice of the English reader by an anecdote in the Life of Young, in which it is recorded that, when Young applied to Pope for advice in the choice of books on first entering on the study of divinity, Pope recommended Thomas Aquinas. This is generally understood to have been no more than a joke; but, if Pope had been a zealous Catholic, it might have been probable that he took this artful method of making Young a convert to popery. The simplicity and enthusiasm of Young rendered him an easy dupe to jesuitical zeal and artifice. But, I believe, Pope was too much attached to poetry to be a bigot to any system of religion. After all, it is true that a great deal of sound divinity is to be learned even by Protestants from Thomas Aquinas.

It appears from a passage in the works of Young, that he read enough of Aquinas, and of similar writers, to have formed a very exalted idea of their

merit. "For," says he, "the minds of the schoolmen were almost as much cloistered as their bodies; they had but little learning, and few books; yet may the most learned be struck with some astonishment at their so singular natural sagacity, and most exquisite edge of thought. Who could expect to find Pindar and Scotus, Shakespeare and Aquinas, of the same party? Both equally show an original, unindebted energy; the *vigor igneus* and *cœlestis origo* burn in both, and leave us in doubt whether genius is more evident in the sublime flights and beauteous flowers of poetry, or in the profound penetration and marvellous, keen, and minute distinctions called the thorns of the schools."

It is said, that the great logician, Bishop Saunderson, was particularly fond of the *Secunda Secundæ* of Aquinas, and that he used constantly to carry with him this treatise, together with Aristotle's Rhetoric and Tully's Offices. A book so much read and esteemed by so great a man, and associated with the works of Cicero and Aristotle, must have no inconsiderable merit.

Joannes Duns, who derived his *cognomen*, or additional name of Scotus, from his native country, was not much posterior to Aquinas in time or in glory.—He was the scholar of William Varro, an Englishman. The epithet of *subtile* was allotted to him, according to the fashion of the times, which bestowed a title on all the more eminent schoolmen. The subtilty of his genius gave him, indeed, an incontrovertible claim to the title. Nothing, it is said of him, was so dark, but he was able to enlighten it; nothing so enigmatic, but, like another Œdipus, he was able to resolve it. But, alas! he carried his subtilty too far. The thread was spun so fine, that it became at last invisible. Many terms were used by him, as they were, indeed, by all the

schoolmen, which, if they conveyed any idea to himself, are yet too recondite to enlighten his less subtile readers. Who is able to explain his *hæcceities*, his *intrinsic modes*, and his *insolubles?* And yet these are terms used to explain other books, and particularly the Scriptures. Our countryman, John Bale, severely censures such theology. He calls this jargon of terms the chimeras of the sophists; and justly observes, that the Roman catholic religion, dressed out in these forms, appears more foolish than the fabulous theology of Hesiod and Orpheus.

"Joannes Duns Scotus," says his panegyrist Lansius, "was learned to a miracle in logic, and in the thorny paths of divinity. He founded the sect of the Scotists, which was opposed to the Thomists. He was greater than Homer in one respect, since not only cities but kingdoms contended for the honour of his birth. The English, the Irish, the Scotch, the French, and the Italians, have claimed him as their own."

He was, however, unfortunate in his end: we are told, but I know not whether much credit is due to the story, that being seized with an apoplexy, and supposed to be dead, he was buried too soon; and, reviving in the vault, called in vain for assistance, and died before he could be released.

The learning of the modern ages is very different from the learning of poor Duns; and no kingdom will now contend with Scotland for the honour of producing this subtile doctor. His diligence and sagacity are, however, truly admirable. His works consist of twelve volumes in folio, which were published in the last century, at Lyons. Though none, indeed, will now read them, yet they ought to be preserved, as very curious monuments of a peculiar learning and genius, and of indefatigable industry.

Remond Lulle, or, as he is called in Latin, Ray-

mondus Lullus, flourished about the year 1300, nearly at the same time with Duns Scotus. He was born in Majorca, and has long been the boast of the Spaniards. His pretensions and reputation were very high, and he became distinguished by the title of *Doctor Illuminatus*.

He is said to have spent his youth in profligacy, and not to have been reformed till the age of forty; but he then engaged in the conversion of the Saracens, and, after having suffered much ill treatment, was at last stoned to death. He was, therefore, of course, worshipped by the people of Arragon as a martyr. He was probably soon deposed from this elevation; for there arose a party who maintained that he had been instructed in all he knew by that scientific preceptor, the devil.

In consequence of his intercourse with the Arabians, he acquired a knowledge of medicine, natural philosophy, and astronomy. From all these combined, he deduced a science of his own, as he represented it in Spain and Italy—that of chemistry and alchemy. An old writer, Robertus Constantinus, asserts that he had seen, in the Tower of London, a piece of pure gold made by the alchemical art of Raymondus Lullus.

He is said to have written more than four thousand treatises in philosophy, medicine, and theology. He founded a sect of Lullists, and was the inventor of a certain *method*, which our great Lord Bacon reprobates as useless and ostentatious. It tended to teach the terms of art only, as if he who knows the words were sure to comprehend the art itself. Rapin also censures it as a *method* which has no solidity, and which, so far from making men learned, does not even suppose them reasonable.

He gave his logical work the pompous title of the Great Art; and he engaged that, by its assist-

ance, any man, however ignorant, should acquire the whole circle of the sciences in three months. This work was to be accomplished by means of various diagrams, circular and triangular, and by the letters of the alphabet mysteriously transposed. He had, however, his admirers and followers; but his *great art* has been found of so little use to mankind, that the mode of its operation is unknown. They who are curious and idle, may find some account of it in Gassendus, Alstedius, and Keckermannus; but I advise them to spend their leisure better than in the research.

Lullus is not, indeed, esteemed for any real improvement in knowledge or sound learning. He threw a veil of obscurity over his writings, which has often served as a cloak of ignorance. It is not surprising that an alchemist should affect the darkness and enigmatic air of a magician. In an age of profound ignorance, the less he was understood, the more he was admired.

Considering the disadvantages under which the celebrated schoolmen laboured, and the multitude and profundity of their works, many of them exhibit very stupendous and animating examples of human industry. I have, indeed, collected these few observations on them with a view to encourage the young student to diligence, by suggesting to him what great works the human intellect is capable of performing in the short period of a life; and at the same time to deter him from wasting the force of his genius in subjects uselessly abstruse, or in any modes of exertion which are not likely to become long and extensively advantageous to his fellow-creatures.

NO. LXVI.—ON THE VALUE OF AN HONEST MAN.

It is the folly and misfortune of human nature to prefer the present to the future, the agreeable to the useful, the shining to the solid. We admire wit, beauty, wealth, titles, and all that sparkles with the brilliancy of external lustre; and though we probably approve the plain and homely virtues which form the foundation of all real excellence, it is with the cold feelings of unimpassioned judgement. But in youth, when our choice in life is usually fixed, we are much more disposed to pursue what we admire than what we only approve; and the consequence is, that the greater number form the earliest and most durable attachments to vanity. Sober maxims, rules of prudence, dictates of justice, plain truth, simplicity of manners, constancy in friendship, and regularity in business, appear with few charms in the eyes of him who pants for the noble distinctions of being remarked at public places for elegance of dress, admired for the most splendid vehicle, celebrated for his wit at a masquerade, smiled upon at court, and at length, perhaps, rewarded with a title, a riband, and a star. To obtain such bliss, far other qualifications are necessary than the antiquated virtues of one's grandfather. The business must be done by dress, address, and, in short, the graces, the graces, the graces! With respect to honesty, I have somewhere read, that a man of honour, on hearing honesty attributed to his fashionable friend, expressed some degree of displeasure at the panegyric, and declared, that such a compliment was only fit for his footman. Our first question concerning a gentleman whose character we wish to learn, is seldom, Is he honest?

but, Is he rich? Is he a man of fashion, spirit, ton, or a bon vivant?

Now there have been of late, and indeed at all times, many men of fashion totally destitute of moral honesty. They have possessed every personal grace, and every pleasing accomplishment. They could sing, dance, and play on musical instruments. They could converse with the grave and the gay, and adapt all their sentiments to the present company. They had that freedom which is called charming, and which enabled them to push themselves into all companies, and accost men of rank and character by their surnames, and without any respectful addition. All this could not fail to excite the praise of the ladies, and the envy of the gentlemen. But in the end it has been, in several notorious instances, found that these charming men, with the appearance of whatever is good and agreeable, have been the first to overreach in a bargain, exceedingly successful in the profession of swindling, and particularly adroit at a forgery.

So despicable and detestable do the characters of such men appear on detection, that I cannot help thinking honesty is the best ornament, as well as the best policy. It is, indeed, a diamond of the first water; while all the showy, dazzling, unsubstantial qualities which the artful assume for the purposes of deceit, are no more than French paste, or paltry glass, at once both tawdry, brittle, and vile.

I would recommend unfeigned honesty as ornamental; because such is the present state of manners, it is infinitely more likely to be pursued and valued by the majority of mankind, when they think it will conciliate the love and admiration of each other, than when they view it merely as a moral ex-

cellence. The man of reading, reflection, and a cultivated mind, will want no motives to pursue it but those which are suggested by his own conscience and the delicacy of his sentiments. But to the mass of mankind, composed of all ages, all ranks, all tempers, all professions, all parties, and all religions, it is necessary to render any particular virtue which the moralist wishes to promote, both lovely and honourable. Interest, passion, and fancy, must be taught, if possible, to second the decisions of reason. She is too often deposed by her refractory subjects, whose obedience, indeed, is seldom to be relied on, but when it is in some degree spontaneous.

It cannot surely be denied, that the quality which pervades every part of human life, and tends immediately to render it secure, comfortable, and honourable, is itself one of the most honourable which can be possessed by a human creature; and such is that uncelebrated virtue, plain unassuming moral honesty. Without it, society is a den of thieves, and men are to each other wolves and foxes.

Every day's experience evinces the justness of that representation in the Scriptures, in which it is said, that the heart is deceitful above all things, who can know it? In the most trifling intercourse, where neither pleasure nor profit are in view, the propensity to deceit appears in the little promises, professions, compliments, which are mutually made, usually without any sincerity of regard, and often with real and inveterate aversion. But where interest is in view, the machinations made use of for the accomplishment of mean and mercenary purposes are often such as might characterize an infernal agent. Plausibility is, at the same time, worn

as a cloak; and he who has a design on your purse, your life, or your country, will assume all the appearance of cordial friendship and unpolluted honour. It is well known, that the graces, the agreeable qualities, as they are called, and the appearance of the most amiable virtues, have been possessed in perfection by men who finished their lives with ignominy as victims of the law.

Indeed, this common honesty, as it is named, is far less common than our pride is willing to suppose; but if it could be introduced into all the employments of life, the golden age would be restored.

Happy state! but, alas, it is imaginary! It might, however, I am convinced, in some degree be realized, if due care were taken in education to render the least tendency to deceit disgraceful and obnoxious to punishment; and every ingenuous, open, honest action honourable; for honour is the nurse of the virtues, as well as of the arts. Instead of which, the writings of some modern instructors tend immediately to recommend every species of deceit at that early age, when a little evil sown in the bosom by the tutor, cannot fail to take root, and grow to a stupendous magnitude.

Early and late, by night and by day, in season and out of season, as the Scripture strongly expresses it, I would inculcate in the breast of boys the just remark of the moral poet, that an honest man is the noblest work of God.

NO. LXVII.—REFLECTIONS ON THE ORIGIN AND EFFECTS OF SCULPTURE, WITH MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS ON IT.

That the human mind is naturally delighted with the works of imitation, is a remark of the earliest philosophers; and the justness of it has been uniformly confirmed by every subsequent inquiry. Even those objects which in the reality disgust the senses, please the imagination when imitated by a skilful artist: but if imitation is capable of converting deformity to beauty, and of teaching inelegance to please, its influence must be much greater when the object imitated originally excites ideas of the sublime and beautiful.

Just representations of the irrational or inanimate creation are, indeed, in a great degree pleasing; but the highest delight which the fine arts can bestow is derived from imitations of human nature. The variegated landscape is, perhaps, viewed with greater complacency on the canvass than in the natural appearance; because imitation adds a grace to the intrinsic beauty. The bloom of the grape, the blush of the peach, and the crimson of the rose, designed by nature to please, may, perhaps, please yet more when artificially presented to the view by her handmaiden. The same observation may justly be extended to the imitation of animals, and the placid scenery of still life. All these are found to please the imagination, but not to elevate the mind. They inspire a complacency, but do not warm with sentiment, or animate to virtue. To touch the heart with sympathy, to excite the nobler affections, and to give a masculine pleasure, man must be the object of imitation; the sentiments and passion of the human bosom must

speak in the features and attitudes of the canvass or the marble. That general connexion which subsists between all who partake of humanity, causes a general concern in the interests of each individual. Man, indeed, views the actions and passions of men with all the solicitude of one concerned in the event, but looks down upon the lower part of the creation with the dispassionate curiosity of a disinterested spectator.

To represent the attitudes and features of his actions and his passions, is the principal business of *Sculpture;* and though a considerable degree of its excellence depends on the delicacy of manual execution, yet has it ever maintained a distinguished place among the arts which require exquisite sensibility, and a fine imagination. Nature, indeed, lies open to the inspection of the learned and of the unlearned, of the stupid and of the ingenious; but the man of fine feeling, and of elegant taste, can alone perceive and imitate her more delicate traits, her more captivating, though less obvious, allurements.

The first productions of sculpture probably owe their origin to religion. Too gross to conceive immaterial ideas of the Deity, the multitude wanted some sensible object to fix their attention and excite their enthusiasm. Thus He, whose temple is all space, and whose altar the universe, was confined in his residence to some rude image shapen by the hand of idolatry: but, however derogatory from the dignity of the Supreme Being, or inconsistent with the reason of man, the practice has been particularly favourable to the arts of imitation. The statue that was formed as an object of religious adoration has, indeed, failed in its original purpose; but it has been viewed with a degree of wonder scarcely less ardent than devotion.

And, indeed, it is to be presumed, that few will wish that degree of idolatrous attention which is at present paid to the statues of the ancient deities forbidden; for whenever the productions of the fine arts shall cease to be admired, they will cease to be imitated. Such an event every friend to just taste will deprecate, since to renounce the models of the ancients is to renounce the most captivating embellishment of art, an adherence to simplicity and nature. While a *Venus de Medicis*, and an *Apollo Belvidere*, shall continue to be standards of excellence, no one can with reason apprehend lest the chaste graces of real elegance should be sacrificed to false glare and superfluous ornament.

To do justice to the remains of antiquity by description, requires a pen as masterly as the artist's chisel. A Virgil should exhibit the ideas of Praxiteles. A professor of the art may, perhaps, find technical terms adequate to a technical description. He may expatiate on proportion, and dictate rules for forming a judgement; but the language of an artist can seldom be completely understood but by artists, and the feelings of the spectator, duly informed, are the best criterion of excellence in the arts of painting and sculpture.

Comparisons are frequently made between the respective beauty, the value, and the utility of the several arts. One of the best judges of antiquity has asserted, in a well-known passage of his works, that all the arts which tend to polish and refine human nature are united by a common bond. That painting, poetry, and sculpture, nearly approximate to each other, is obvious on the slightest review. They have constantly reflected images on each other, and joining like the Graces, hand in hand, have, from the union of their force, commanded in all ages universal admiration. If the Mantuan

muse drew her most beautiful pictures from the originals of sculpture, to the muse of Homer, on the other hand, has sculpture been indebted for her master-piece. The sublime idea of a Being who shook the heavens with his nod, existed originally in the poet's mind. The artist, however, embodied the ideal form, and may be said to have wanted only Promethean aid to have realized the creature of imagination. The marble form has been transferred to canvass, and the representation of the tablet to the marble, with equal applause both to the arts and to the professors: and though some have essayed to ascertain the superiority of one or other of these sister arts, yet, as it is invidious to give a distinguished preference to either, when each endeavours to exalt the other, it may be more candid to assert with Horace, on a similar occasion, that they equally require and communicate mutual assistance with all the benignity of disinterested friendship.

Sculpture is not, any more than the other arts, confined to imitations of the human form. Subordinate to statuary are many other operations of the chisel, which require, in the highest degree, both ingenuity of design and skill in execution. The marble urn and the sepulchral monument have ever been the chief ornaments of mansions dedicated to the Deity. The palaces of princes have derived less splendour from the profusion of finery, and the glittering of magnificence, than from the foliage of the Corinthian capital, and the elegant wreaths of the festoon; and though the modern invention of multiplying the works of the artists by devices which require no ingenuity, has prostituted the ornaments of a temple to the gaudiness of a suburbian villa, and the decoration of a palace to the embellishment of a tradesman's door-post,

yet must not he whose hand formed the original vase, or sculptured the storied urn, lose that praise which is ever due to the inventive artist, the man of original genius and of native taste.

It belongs to sculpture, as well as to painting, not only to represent single figures, but to combine them in a group. The relievo is a marble picture: though it wants those graces of the canvass which result from a due mixture of light and shade, and from a variety of colours, yet it possesses some advantages which may ultimately compensate the defect, and even give it a superiority over the picture. Exposure to the weather, the commonest accidents, and the insensible depredations of time, soon destroy the comparatively transient productions of the pencil; but the marble tablet defies the corroding tooth of ages, and may survive even a deluge. There remains not a single painting of Parrhasius or Apelles, of Timanthes or Protagoras, by which we can judge of the justice of those praises so lavishly bestowed on them by Pliny, Quintilian, and Lucian; but many ancient relievos continue to the present day in all their original perfection.

Sculpture displays peculiar grace and excellence when it condescends to work in miniature. The gem, however precious and beautiful, receives additional value, and more attractive beauty, from the hand of the artist. The features of the hero and philosopher, when marked on the stone whose cohesion is like that of adamant, are transmitted to the latest ages unhurt by accidents, and unimpaired by time. Thus is the votary of learning enabled to behold the countenances of those whose achievements astonish, whose writings charm, and whose precepts improve him; and, after the lapse of some thousand years, to indulge the natural desire of

viewing the real aspect of men who shone in the field and in the cabinet, or who dignified the portico or the academy. When all other sources of information have failed, the figure on the gem has often illustrated beauties and cleared obscurities in the classics and the historians. Of these smaller productions of the sculptor, the ingenuity of invention, stimulated by the hopes of gain, has found means to multiply copies without number: but though the copies should lessen the pecuniary value, they cannot diminish the intrinsic merit of the originals.

That species of sculpture which is distinguished by the specific appellation of *Engraving on copper*, was totally unknown to the ancients. By the co-operation of this sister art, the productions of painting are universally diffused, and the ornament received in the gallery of an individual becomes the embellishment of every habitation. However great its uses, and exalted its perfection, it must be confessed, by every impartial observer, to owe a great degree of its advancement to the artists of our own country; and it were easy to enumerate some works of English engravers, of which the justness of representation, and the delicacy of execution, have not been surpassed by any age or in any climate.

NO. LXVIII.—THAT THE ENGLISH POSSESS A FINE TASTE FOR SCULPTURE, AND THAT IT OUGHT TO BE ENCOURAGED FOR ITS MORAL EFFECTS.

There are some, who, with a spirit too confined for the liberality of philosophy, have excluded from all pretensions to refined taste that part of mankind which nature has placed in the northern regions.

This faculty has been limited to those happier mortals who inhale the balmy breezes of the warmer climates. That these arts have been most successfully cultivated in the warmer regions of Europe, cannot be denied; but let it not be said, that any of the faculties of the free-born mind are local. Nor let it be hastily concluded, that the English, who are classed by these philosophers among the northern savages, but who are known to possess the mental powers in a state of vigour equal at least to the rest of the world, are destitute of taste, of that faculty which adds a grace to the exertions of all others, and without which the strongest efforts of the mind have an appearance of illiberality. If it was late before our artists made any considerable proficiency in sculpture, it must not be immediately inferred that they were incapable of excellence; but that, as is incontestibly true, they did not attempt it. To expect that the art should attain perfection before it is an object of national attention, is no less unreasonable than to require the fruit in maturity before the summer's sun has shone upon the tree.

The sunshine of royal or popular patronage can baffle the rigours of the climate, and raise luxuriant vegetation on the bleakest mountain. Rewarded by a prince, and encouraged by a people, it is not to be wondered that sculpture has among us made rapid advances to attainable perfection. It were, indeed, easy to enumerate names which would do honour to the schools of Greece, and of ancient and modern Italy; but to praise living merit is frequently to excite envy without conferring fame. The ingenious artist, then, must be content to appeal to posterity for unalloyed applause; and, when the tongue of envy shall be wearied with detraction, merited praise will find at last a willing audience.

There are sculptors among us of the present day, whose fame will be as durable as the marble which they shape, and who while they carve the block, may promise themselves, like Thucydides, an everlasting possession.

Those arts, however, after all that has been said in their praise, which tend to flatter the imagination without amending the heart, and the utility of which appears to consist in their administration to pleasure, will, perhaps, be judged unworthy a serious attention by the rigid votaries of severe virtue. Too wise to be captivated with pleasure, they seek only for improvement. The pill that contributes to health they can swallow without requiring it to be covered with gold, or sweetened with honey; but to condemn the productions of the chisel as merely instrumental to delight, is to assume that as a concession which can never be granted. In truth, the imitative arts are capable of conveying moral instruction in the most effectual manner, as their operation is instantaneous. They require not the deductions of logic, which can be made only by cultivated intellects; but by appealing to the senses, which are sometimes combined in great perfection with the rudest minds, they strike immediately and irresistibly on the susceptible heart. The master's hand can give to matter the features of the soul, and impress on the rude block those thoughts and passions which naturally excite congenial sentiments and sympathetic emotions. The mind, which, perhaps, could never be sensible of the beauty of virtue from the reasonings of a Plato or a Socrates, may be captivated with her amiable form when displayed by the manual exertions of a Phidias or Praxiteles.

No man of sensibility can walk in the repositories of the illustrious dead, where the forms that

moulder beneath his feet are represented in marble on the walls, without feeling, as he treads the solemn aisle, the most virtuous sensations. His faculties seem to stretch, and his virtues to expand, in efforts to reach the level of such exalted society. He catches the contagion of virtue by intuition, he forms heroic resolutions of emulating the excellence he admires, and, perhaps, ventures to entertain a secret hope that he may one day fill a niche in the venerable circle of departed worthies. The descendant blushes to degenerate from his ancestors, who seem to view him from the sacred walls, and would upbraid him with his baseness. He feels himself stimulated to equal, if not to surpass, their virtues, and out-shine their glory.

Sculpture has, likewise, another no less efficacious, though more indirect, influence on the morals. It has, in common with all the fine arts, a powerful effect in softening the temper and humanizing the manners; an effect which will, perhaps, be felt and acknowledged by none but men of delicate taste and elegant attainments. The votaries of gain, of luxury, or of coarse pleasure, have lost, by the grossness of their enjoyments, that nice susceptibility of impressions, that tenderness of feeling, which alone can perceive, with full force, the pleasures of imagination. The vulgar eye gazes with equal satisfaction on the canvass of a Titian and the daubings of a sign-post, and discovers no more ingenuity in the works of the statuary than in the rude image of the mere mechanic: but they whose natural feelings have been properly improved by culture, nor have yet become callous by attrition with the world, know from experience how the heart is mollified, the manners polished, and the temper sweetened, by a well-directed study of the arts of

imitation. A fine sensibility of artificial excellence insensibly extends itself to the perception of natural and moral beauty; and the student returns from the artist's gallery to his station in society, with a breast more disposed to feel and to reverberate the endearments of social life, and of reciprocal benevolence.

Sculpture claims, indeed, the power of exciting virtue, and the privilege of rewarding it. Many of the great benefactors to mankind have been animated in danger, and supported in fatigue, by the enlivening hope of enjoying a future existence in the memory of posterity. Satisfied with this recompence in reversion, heroes, patriots, and philosophers, have neglected the calls of interest and the allurements of pleasure, to advance the happiness of society, and to adorn humanity. The sweet solace of their pain, the compensation of their labours, for which the heart has often panted, and every faculty has toiled, may be ultimately conferred by the hand of the statuary. Let not, therefore, the art be prostituted to perpetuate insignificance or vice, and to gratify the vanity of undeserving opulence, which possesses the power of rewarding virtue, and of bestowing immortality on perishable excellence.

NO. LXIX.—ON THE PROPRIETY OF EXTENDING CLASSICAL STUDIES TO NATURAL AND EXPERIMENTAL PHILOSOPHY, AND UNITING PHILOLOGY WITH SCIENCE.

STUDENTS who have been most attached to classical literature, and who consequently have succeed-

ed best in it, have often been grossly ignorant of those pleasing parts of science, the laws and operations of nature.

Were it only for the sake of variety, and the pleasure resulting from it, I would beg leave to suggest to classical scholars the propriety of extending the objects of their pursuit. Poetry, history, moral philosophy, and philology, though truly delightful of themselves, will become more so when the sameness of the ideas which they represent is relieved by the interesting, diversified, and unbounded scenes of natural philosophy. It is like going into a beautiful country which we never saw before, or like the arrival of a new season of the year, when we make an excursion from classical ground, on which we have long dwelt, into the territories of natural science. An assemblage of ideas entirely new is presented to the mind of him who never before deviated from the flowery, but comparatively narrow, paths of philology. His understanding is refreshed with variety, and enriched with new acquisitions; and he returns, after a salutary change, to criticism, history, poetry, and whatever else constitutes polite letters, with a more eager appetite.

A knowledge of nature and of arts, as well as sciences, supplies a copious source of new ideas to the classical writer. Moral maxims and historical examples can scarcely fail, after letters have been long cultivated, to lose the grace and attraction of novelty. But from natural philosophy new allusions, new exemplifications, new similitudes, new comparisons, and new images of all kinds, are easily deduced. What is borrowed from this department cannot have been entirely anticipated by the ancients; since how little did they know of electricity, magnetism, hydrostatics, optics, pneumatics, and a

thousand other most entertaining subjects, in which philosophy appears subservient to manufactures and the accommodation of common life! A man may have read the best Greek and Latin classics, and scarcely have one just and truly philosophical idea of the more curious physical phænomena of the orb on which he lives.

I wish, indeed, that classical taste may always be united with a competent knowledge of the sciences. I am convinced it would be for the advantage of both. For if it be true, on the one hand, that classical scholars have been often most disgracefully ignorant of things, it is also true, on the other, that natural philosophers have often been unable to give their discoveries that pleasing dress which classical taste alone can bestow, and which is necessary to allure the general attention. By a reciprocal participation of each other's knowledge, the classic would become more solid, and the naturalist more pleasing. At the same time it must be confessed, that solid science ought not to be superfluously decorated, nor delivered in the style of rhetoric. Besides that a profusion of misplaced ornaments is always unpleasing, tropes, figures, and unnecessary epithets, would introduce an obscurity most unfavourable to the progress of science. The Attic style seems, indeed, peculiarly suited to scientific productions; and if Aristotle is too little ornamented, yet his chastity, correctness, and purity, seldom fail to please on a diligent perusal. Pliny the elder is, however, a more agreeable model of style, though his selection of matter is extremely culpable.

We have, indeed, many writers in natural philosophy who were trained in classical schools, and who were early polished by the elegancies of philological literature. But in their subsequent studies they seem to have relinquished the models of

the golden ages, and to have written with little solicitude to please by their style, provided they were able to communicate information. The consequence has been, that many fine discoveries of original philosophers have either passed unnoticed by the common reader, or they have been represented in a style of languid and flowery description by writers whose knowledge of nature was too superficial to enable them to communicate it with accuracy.

But, in truth, it must be allowed, that classical scholars have been much oftener ignorant of physiological learning than natural philosophers of polite letters. Many of our very eminent poets, when they have occasionally introduced descriptions of the animal, vegetable, or fossil productions of nature, have committed egregious mistakes. To the honour of the poet of the Seasons, it has been remarked, that he was an accurate observer of those appearances which he delighted to describe.

But without insisting on the utility of physiological science as preparatory to composition, one may ask, who is there that pretends to the character of the general scholar, or them an of a comprehensive mind, that would choose to live his days without seeing the new world which is opened to his view by the microscope, the telescope, and all the curious machines of the experimentalist? What student would neglect to look into the entertaining volumes of a Ray, a Derham, an Adams, a Baker, a Swammerdam, a Keil, a Rowning, a Hales, a Cotes, a Clare, a Halley, a Boerhaave, a Linné, a Buffon, a Ferguson, or a Pennant? To shut our eyes on such glorious scenes as they exhibit, is, as Milton calls it, an injury and sullenness against nature. In this age and country, lectures in experi-

mental philosophy are read in every part of the kingdom, and the student has an opportunity of acquainting himself with the most curious discoveries in physics at a very trifling expense, and without the trouble of furnishing and managing a costly and complicated apparatus; an inestimable advantage, and such an one as the philosophers of antiquity would have traversed the world to enjoy. I have been astonished to see how very careless, in this respect, even men of sense and liberal education are found, and how few, comparatively, attend the lectures of the experimentalist. Even in the university of Oxford, I can remember very few, comparatively, used to attend the professors who read most ingenious lectures on astronomy, chemistry, and natural philosophy. The classical scholars seemed rather to despise that kind of learning; and, indeed, we usually undervalue what we do not understand.

I have frequently been surprised to find how few, in comparison, visit that noble repository of nature's productions, the British Museum. Many thousands, and those too in the more enlightened ranks, have lived and died within a mile or two of it, without having once had the curiosity to inspect it. Ye shades of Pliny and Aristotle, how indignant must ye have been, if ye observed a people pretending a love of science, yet regardless of such invaluable treasures, even at their thresholds!

That the vulgar and illiterate should be incurious, is not surprising; but that the classical scholar should be contentedly ignorant of nature's works, and of the modern improvements in science, is no less astonishing than disgraceful. To those who are induced, by their knowledge of a few languages, and of the classics, to think themselves completely accomplished in all human learning, I will recom-

mend the perusal of the notes to the preface of Chambers's Dictionary.

NO. LXX.—ON THE EFFECTS OF BAD EXAMPLE AMONG MENIAL SERVANTS, DOMESTICS, AND DEPENDANTS.

It is found by experience, that there are few orders in the community more profligate than the servants and domestic dependants of debauched and dissipated persons in high life. They are greatly to be pitied, as many causes concur to render their corruption almost unavoidable. They have usually been slightly educated, if educated at all; and are often thrust, at an early age, into a wicked world, destitute of all principles, moral and religious.

Indeed, the profligacy among the servants of the corrupted rich orders, is no trifling evil. Much of the corruption of the common people is certainly caused and increased by their example. The following is a case too common in the country village. A young man, with all the happy simplicity of honesty and innocence, is engaged, in consequence of the good character which he bears, in the service of the neighbouring lord. He goes to the metropolis, and spends a winter in the low haunts of the lowest debauchery and drunkenness. While his master is engaged in the scenes of polite amusement, the poor menial, who waits for him during the tedious watches of the night, solaces himself in the ale-house or the night-cellar, amidst all that can corrupt by examples of fraud, excess, ill language, and every vice which debases humanity. His honest parents, and his brothers and sisters,

are in the meantime enjoying the sweet slumbers procured by labour and temperance.

At the return of summer, the poor fellow retires with his master into the country. He is finely dressed, and naturally excites the admiration of the village and his own family. What he says comes from him with the authority of an oracle. He considers himself, indeed, as greatly enlightened, and undertakes to communicate the illumination. In the first place, he ridicules the rusticity of his friends and neighbours, and laughs at their awkward dress and behaviour. Their patient submission to labour he calls plodding and slavery; their sobriety and temperance, covetousness and meanness; the conjugal affection and regard to decency, ignorance of the world; and their religion, superstition.

He commonly confirms his opinions by alleging the example of his lord. "My lord," says he, "I would have you know, is a great man, a very great man. Therefore you may depend upon it, whatever your godly books may teach you to the contrary, that his manner of acting and thinking is right, and such as is most conducive to happiness and enjoyment. Now this is my lord's plan: He drinks, games, swears, runs in debt, and never thinks of paying his bill at the shop; though, to do him justice, if he loses at cards, he always pays ready money. My lord, likewise, keeps two or three mistresses, besides his wife, with whom, indeed, he never sleeps; but then he lets her go very grand; and though two or three of our milliners and mantua-makers have broke since they have served us, spares no cost in supporting her appearance. My lord never goes to church, but calls the parsons a pack of hypocrites, and employs his Sunday either in travelling, or in cards, dice, drinking, and visiting the ladies. I usually stand behind my

master's chair at dinner, and attend very closely to all the conversation; so that I often pick up a great deal of improvement: and from all I have been able to collect, I am led to conclude, that what we hear in sermons, and read in the Bible, is all nonsense; and that the true wisdom is to gratify one's senses and passions as much as one can, get money in any manner, provided it can be gotten safely, and live jollily. So keep it up, my lads, and follow mine and my lord's example!"

The lads and lasses of the village listen to his lesson with mouths open, and hearts panting to imitate their kind instructor. Many immediately relinquish the plough and the dairy, and hasten up to London in pursuit of fine clothes, money, and pleasure.—They who remain behind endeavour not to be outdone by their old comrade, the footman, in drunkenness, gaming, and debauchery; and the village, from being the seat of peace, innocence, industry, and contentment, becomes the sink of sin and misery. Many soon emigrate from it to supply the Strand, and the colony in the South Sea.

This is really no exaggerated representation. There are few country gentlemen who do not consider the summer residence of a dissipated man of fashion, or gamester, or luxurious nabob in their neighbourhood as a serious evil, because of the corruption of morals which his corrupted servants introduce. There are not many villages where some Mr. John or Mrs. Abigail, after a winter in London, does not endeavour to turn the country people from the errors of their ways, by obliquely teaching them that virtue is ignorance. The example of rank and riches adds a weight to their arguments, which nothing but woful experience can counterpoise. So extensive has the contagion been considered, that I have seen it mentioned in advertise-

ments of houses on sale, as a very great recommendation, that there was no great man's seat within nine miles of the situation.

Though riches and titles often render their owners adepts in a new kind of philosophy, and teach them to see the vanity of morality and religion in their own case; yet they cannot prevent the want of morality and religion, when it appears in their own servants and dependants, from being severely felt by themselves. Persons in high life do, indeed, in these times, often pretend to extraordinary benevolence, because it happens to be the fashion. Let, then, their benevolence be rendered conspicuous among those of their own household, and those of the villages and towns which border on their paternal estates. We cannot help distrusting their pretensions to patriotism, to a love of mankind, to universal benevolence, when we see them, by the force of their powerful example, unloosing all the moral and religious restraints which tend to preserve the innocence and happiness of individuals and communities; when we see them carelessly diffusing drunkenness, debauchery, disease, and infidelity, among those whom fortune has rendered the humble ministers of their luxury and pride.

NO. LXXI.—ON MUSIC, AS AN AMUSEMENT.

Most of the pleasurable diversions have a tendency, when pursued with excessive ardour, not only to relax in a proper degree, but to enervate the mind. They indispose it for manly virtue, and introduce a tenderness of feeling ill suited to encounter the usual asperities of common life. But the study of music, under due direction, while it sweetly

soothes the sense of hearing, touches the soul, and elevates and refines its nature. Conducted by philosophy, it is able to infuse the noblest thoughts, to urge to the most animated action, to calm the ruffled spirits, and, co-operating with religion, to eradicate every malignant propensity.

Amid the invectives thrown out against the dissipated manners of the present age, its taste for music deserves applause. Even as a source of sensual pleasure, it is one of the purest and most dignified; yet it may be lamented that it is cultivated merely as a sensual pleasure. That which titillates the ear often by the most artificial complication of harmony, is not always best calculated to affect the heart. Simple music, for which the present age seems to have little relish, is capable of producing the most powerful effects on the human bosom; and the neglect of it is the cause that the mind is often not at all interested in the most celebrated performances at the modern concert.

He who has made music the study of his life, and possesses an ear refined by application to fastidious delicacy, is pleased with the curious productions of the Italian composer. But let the admired composition be performed in the hearing of another, whose natural powers are equally sensible, but who has been used to the works of Purcell and Handel only, and he will find his ear not greatly delighted, and his affections totally unmoved.

The kind of music, however excellent as a piece of art, which penetrates no farther than the ear, produces an effect quite different from what was intended by the original invention. As a pleasure of the sense, though elegant in a high degree, it yet contributes to imbecility. The inartificial music of the drum, at which the connoisseur might be en-

raged, is better able to produce the genuine effects of music, lively emotions of mind, than the finest modulations of an Italian opera.

Of what kind is the music that delights those who are stigmatised by the name of vulgar, but who possess all the faculties of perception in a state undepraved by artificial refinement? Such persons are the uncorrupted sons of nature; and the sounds which universally please them are sounds which nature intended to please, and for which she adapted the finely-susceptible sense. The drum, the fife, the trumpet, the harp, the bagpipe, and the dulcimer, are the instruments which inspire the lower ranks with joy and with courage, and which alleviate the sense of the greatest labours and the greatest dangers. If we were to suppose a Giardini condescending to play a fine Italian piece of music at a rural fair, there is little doubt but his audience would be stolen away from him by the itinerant performer on a Scotch bagpipe or the hurdy-gurdy.

There are certain ballads and certain tunes adapted to them, which are known to almost every individual in a nation, and which please on every repetition. The music as well as the poetry of these is perfectly simple. The Scotch tunes have a sweetness which delight every ear unspoiled by the complex productions of laborious ingenuity, but which the Italian master condescends not to intermix in his boasted composures. And yet nothing can be more natural and easy than the sweet wild woodnotes of the Highland swain.

There are also certain psalm tunes, which, with little merit as technical performances, are able to excite in the mind a great degree of devotional ecstacy. Those of the hundredth and the hundred-and-fourth Psalms are the most popular music in

England; and they are no less adapted to excite a spirit of piety, and elevate the soul to heaven, than to soothe the ear by their simple melody.

These observations are adduced with a view to recommend the adoption of a taste for simple music among those who study music merely for the entertainment of a domestic circle. It appears to be more pleasing to the ear in its natural state than the laboured and complicated productions of the professed modern musician; and experience abundantly proves that it powerfully affects the heart and the imagination. If, then, it were received in those numerous families, where, in the present age, music forms a constant diversion, its effects on the morals of the people at large would be truly important. It would elevate with piety, warm with generosity, enlarge, ennoble, correct, and purify every social affection. There is scarcely any sentiment which may not be excited, increased, diminished, or modified, by a piece of music, simple enough to be strongly expressive. Thus powerful as well as sweet, it is to be wondered at, as well as regretted, that it should be superseded by a species of complicated harmony, ingenious, indeed, in a high degree, yet possessing little other claim to attention but as it affords an elegant amusement for a vacant hour. Music at present often forms a considerable part of female education; and it is to be lamented, that an accomplishment, which, when properly regulated, is most efficacious in filling the young mind with virtuous and generous sentiments, should form only an innocent pastime and polite employment.

Paradoxical as it may appear, it is really true, that music seems of late to be addressed to the eye as well as to the ear. Dexterity of execution, the wonderfully expeditious motion of the fingers, the hand, and the arm, cause an equal share of applause with

the tones of the instrument. He who can hold his breath the longest is proportionally honoured with the longest continuation of plaudits. The sweetest shepherd that ever piped on his Doric reed would be less applauded than he who can make his pipe squeak for the space of five minutes without respiration. The simple lyre of Apollo would scarcely engage attention while the finger of a modern is dancing on the strings of a violoncello. To attain this stupendous excellence of rapid execution requires the unremitted labour of a life; while a much less degree of application would enable a performer to ravish and captivate the heart if the natural feelings of the audience were not superseded by an acquired taste.

It is often urged as a reason for neglecting the study and the performance of music, that to excel in it, or to play in such a manner as not to offend a judge, requires a portion of time incompatible with an attention to more valuable acquirements. To arrive at this surprising expedition, this musical legerdemain, it is, indeed, necessary to do little else than scrape and pipe. But a comparatively moderate dexterity is sufficient to effect all the great purposes of music,—those of moving the passions in the cause of virtue, and of exciting sentiments of manly pleasure. Fortunately, the simple music which is to produce these desirable effects is the most easily performed. The most powerful influence of music ever known is recorded in the volumes of antiquity; but it is certain, that the musical instruments of antiquity were simple in so great a degree, that it has perplexed the modern musician to discover how they were capable of producing any tolerable music. Yet the feats of Timotheus, though astonishing, perhaps were not fabulous. He, indeed, who looks into the Opera-house after reading Dryden's Ode, will

be induced, from the vacant countenance and sleepy eye, to judge that the musical art of Timotheus may be numbered among the lost arts in which antiquity excelled, and which the moderns ambitiously, yet vainly, imitate.

To produce the full effect of music, it is necessary that the sister art which operates in conjunction with it should not be united to it by a *forced* alliance.—Good poetry and good music, each of which is separately powerful, acquire, by a proper union, an irresistible force over the human heart. Yet every one knows, that many a fine piece of music is deformed by the most wretched rhymes that were ever tagged by a hungry poetaster. Songs we have in abundance, written by authors of acknowledged excellence; and it is surely a want of spirit to adopt, in preference to these, the nonsense which a musician has purchased in Grub-street to be accompanied by his excellent melody. It is, indeed, to be wished, that the superior poets of the age would combine with the best composers of music, and do honour to themselves, and to the arts they love, in cementing, by the liberal communication of mutual assistance, so natural and desirable an union as that of music and poetry. It is a great improvement lately adopted among singers, that they take pains to let the words, as well as the music of their songs, distinctly reach the ears of those whom they profess to entertain or delight.

NO. LXXII.—ON THE BEST METHOD OF EXCITING LITERARY GENIUS IN BOYS WHO POSSESS IT.

That tender sensibility which always accompanies true genius often lays open the heart to such early impressions as are very unfavourable to a virtuous

and prudential conduct. Many parents have, therefore, expressed a wish, that their sons might possess a plain understanding, without any of that fine and susceptible delicacy which is supposed to constitute a genius.

But it appears to me that genius, that glorious gift of Heaven, ought not to be so lightly esteemed. To be superior to other men in the superior part of man, the mind; to perceive external nature with greater acuteness than others; to possess the powers of memory, reflection, imagination, to a fuller extent; and to be more feelingly alive to all the affections of the heart; what is it but to have been favoured by Heaven with a more excellent nature, to have been rendered capable of distinguished happiness, and of communicating good in an effectual and extensive manner to the world at large? Not to wish for such a condition as this, not to be thankful for it when it has fallen to ourselves or our children, is a degree of ingratitude disgraceful to humanity.

And if it be true, that genius is exposed to peculiar dangers at an early age, I would not infer that genius is not to be desired, but that the moral conduct of him in whom it appears should be kept under the restraints of parental authority with peculiar strictness of discipline and vigilance of observation. It is not sufficient merely to give moral cautions, but actual restraints must be imposed; for, after all the boasts of moral philosophy, the most effectual method of restraining young people from vice is to watch them circumspectly, to keep them within bounds, and to remove them from temptation. That susceptibility of temper, which, when unrestrained, leads to vicious habits and indulgencies, will strongly attach itself to all that is laudable and lovely, if care be taken that nothing but what is

truly so be allowed to solicit the attention. Elegant letters will furnish a variety of delightful objects, capable of engrossing both the affections and the imagination, so long as the dangerous allurements of the senses are, as much as possible, removed from the view.

Genius, then, being an endowment most desirable, and not necessarily attended either with misconduct or misfortune, I shall think myself usefully employed in attempting to point out a few methods which may contribute to excite it. The steel must be struck in a proper manner, and with proper materials, before the latent spark can be elicited.

Instead of exercising the understanding only at a very early age, I think a very considerable share of attention should be paid to the cultivation of the fancy. For this purpose, the most entertaining story-books should be read as an amusement; the more romantic, the better adapted to the purpose. The popular histories of giants and fairies, enchanted castles, and ideal beings of uncouth form, and whatever strongly strikes the imagination, or deeply affects the heart, are calculated to vivify the latent seeds of embryo genius. Many of those little books, contemptible as they now appear, which are sold by itinerant pedlars to children and servants, and which are thought too mean to deserve the attention of the learned, formerly constituted the mental food of our sublimest writers in the age of infancy. Not only the old romances, but the common historical ballads of rudest composition, have been read with delight by our best poets, in the early periods of English literature. The works of Shakespeare bear evident marks of that species of reading in which he took pleasure. His witches, his magicians, his ghosts, and all those airy nothings to which he gave a local habitation and a name, owe their origin to the poet's

feeding his fancy on the romantic and superstitious writings of the darker ages. It appears, too, that Milton was extensively acquainted with romances, and that he felt a peculiar pleasure in their perusal. The examples of such men powerfully confirm the propriety of that mode of exciting genius which I principally recommend.

But this sort of books must be placed in the hand of children who show symptoms of genius, merely as matter of entertainment; and if children do not delight in them, they must be laid aside for a more convenient season. It would be ridiculous to read them as a task, and would, indeed, frustrate the intention; for it is the delight which they afford to the infant fancy which constitutes their principal utility. They are found, for the most part, to be particularly adapted to the curious and inexperienced mind of sensible children; they are read with the closest attention; they enable the soul to feel its lively energies expanding to strength and maturity; and they operate on the pregnant mind like a warm vernal shower on a fertile meadow, eliciting the tenderest herbs and flowerets.

It must, indeed, be allowed, that with all their fascinating power over the young imagination, they sometimes exhibit nonsense and futility; many parents and instructors will therefore object to the perusal of them. If these, however, may be rejected, as they must always be when they contain any thing immoral, yet I think it absolutely necessary that some books of similar effect should be substituted in their place; and I cannot help thinking, that none are better suited to the purpose than those of Milton and Shakespeare. An objector may urge, that a young boy will often be at a loss to understand them. But let not this be regarded. Let him read on, and pass over what he does not understand at

the first reading, without impeding his progress. He will of course understand them better on every subsequent reading; and his genius will be called forth much more powerfully by dwelling on what he understands, and receiving a proper impression from it, than by stopping to develope difficulties with the coldness of a critical commentator.

Simple, narrative, and pathetic poetry, is, indeed, so pleasing to the pure and unvitiated mind of boys, that it can scarcely fail to excite their genius, if they possess any; but there are also many works in prose capable of producing the same effect. Rousseau has recommended Robinson Crusoe. I entirely agree with him on the peculiar propriety of feeding the young mind with a book so interesting, and so easy of comprehension. Don Quixote may be recommended for the same purpose. Oriental tales, such as abound in the periodical essayists, are peculiarly proper. Old Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, though a strange performance, very powerfully affects the fancy, and may be used with great advantage in accomplishing the purpose of exciting genius. The Arabian Nights Entertainments, the Tales of the Genii, and the Death of Abel, though they may not be entirely approved by a mature understanding and taste, are well calculated to kindle the flame of genius in the bosom of boys: but, perhaps, no book would be found to afford better passages for this purpose than the Bible, if a little care were taken by the superintendents of education, to select those parts which are so beautifully distinguished for simple sublimity and unaffected pathos. The poetry of the Bible contributed much to the sublimity of Milton.

NO. LXXIII.—ON THE REASONABLENESS OF THE ANTIQUARIAN TASTE.

The baneful effects of those prejudices which the mind forms from an early and wrong association of ideas, have been often felt and deplored in the several departments of morals, of science, and of religion. They have been experienced in a similar manner, though, indeed, with less injury to society, in a province, where the want of adequate objects to excite jealousy and passion might be supposed to preclude their operation; in the studies of humanity and polite letters. To the influence of unjust prepossession it must be attributed, that some kinds of literary pursuits, indisputably innocent at least, such as the study of antiquities, have been attacked with all the shafts of ridicule.

One circumstance which has contributed to extenuate the value of researches into antiquity, is a very exalted opinion of the scientific attainments of the present age. If progressive improvement is universally, and in every instance, the consequence of progressive years, the opinion and the result of it might, perhaps, be well founded. But though it must be allowed, that the advancement of valuable science has been disproportionably rapid within the space of the last two or three centuries; though the invention of printing, of the compass, of many auxiliary instruments, and the diffusion of a liberal spirit, have facilitated modern inquiries of every kind, and consequently accumulated a sum of knowledge which preceding ages could scarcely hope to attain; yet it must be considered that, in the long interval of mental darkness which preceded these inventions, many historical events must have happened, many practices prevailed, many modes of accommodation have

been adopted, which it may concern mankind to know, but which cannot be recalled but by the labours of the antiquary. The general light enjoyed by the present age is strong and diffusive; but it cannot illuminate these distant periods, unless its beams are concentred upon them. The rays of the sun are abundantly sufficient to guide our steps on the surface of the earth; but he who investigates the subterraneous cavern must have recourse to the assistance of the lamp.

The deep researches of our modern antiquaries have sometimes thrown additional light on Scriptural subjects, and have had no inconsiderable influence in dissipating the doubts of the sceptical. The discovery and explanation of a medal by a most ingenious illustrator of ancient mythology, have exhibited to the deist a very powerful confirmation of the Scriptural account of the deluge. It is certainly an erroneous judgement which has censured the studies of the medallist as nugatory. To ancient coins, gems, and medals, learning in general is greatly indebted, and history owes some of its most authentic records. All the usual materials to which writing has been committed are of a perishable nature, exposed to irrecoverable destruction from a thousand slight accidents, and inevitably doomed to perish, after a short period, by the corrosion of time. But the inscription on the faithful metal has been preserved without injury from the earliest periods of civilisation. To seem to pay a veneration to rust, and to estimate the current coin at less than the mutilated brass or copper of a Roman emperor, may appear ridiculous to him who has not duly considered the extensive utility of these acquisitions; but he who has observed light reflected from an apparently contemptible coin on history,

sacred and profane, will respect the laudable and disinterested pursuits of the virtuoso.

Nor will it be found, that in subjects of comparatively less importance than the truth of religion, and the authenticity of historical information, the result of antiquarian labour is destitute of utility. He must have formed a very inadequate idea of the powers and the energy of the human intellect, who imagines that nothing was produced, even in the darkest ages, by the efforts of native ingenuity worthy the adoption of a more refined period. Not only in science, but in politics and œconomics, in the less splendid arts which administer to convenience and enjoyment, much information may be derived, by careful search, from times which have been in general neglected as affording nothing to repay the labour of attention. This at least is certain, that whatever they afford of real use can be cleared from the embarrassment in which it is entangled only by the sagacious antiquary. The ignorance of the ages in question necessarily occasioned a paucity of written documents or memorials. Few and imperfect as these have been, nothing but unwearied perseverance, joined to great penetration, could draw them from their obscure repositories, and give them a sufficient degree of perspicuity. It is happy for mankind that the love of antiquities is a passion which operates with no inconsiderable force. Nothing less could stimulate the laborious student to such long and painful investigations as are often necessary to procure satisfactory information. He, however, who has perseverance enough to surmount all difficulties which oppose his progress in a dark and rugged path, ought to be vindicated from the censures of raillery, however futile his discovery may sometimes appear to a superficial observer. Many

of the most excellent principles in the laws of England, many of our envied political institutions, owe their origin to feudal times; to those times which the classical scholar is tempted to overlook, as presenting little to exercise and reward ingenuity. But it may reasonably be concluded, that they who could devise legal and civil modes of judging and acting avowedly worthy the imitation of the most improved ages, were often equally successful in their other inventions. In developing these, the antiquary sometimes finds, and perhaps dwells upon, less important matters, which are only entertaining; but he is no more to be condemned than the voyager who stops to contemplate the curiosities which occur in his passage, yet at the same time forgets not the place or object of his destination.

It has been mistakenly supposed, that the studies of the antiquary are destitute of entertainment. To the lover of them they unquestionably have afforded pleasure, even under the most disadvantageous circumstances; but, in the present age, they have also entered on a department which engages the attention of the general scholar, and the man of taste and polite learning. They have been employed in recovering, from ancient manuscripts and scarce books, the poetry of our forefathers; and he who is most averse from the more dry and recondite researches, must acknowledge his obligations to those who have judiciously compiled the relics of our ancient poetry.

Obvious as appears the utility of inquiring into the obscure scenes of remote antiquity, it has given rise to sarcasm and ridicule. Circumstances, it must be confessed, have sometimes arisen which seem to justify some degree of raillery. For it is true, that, in the course of various and profound researches, many collateral discoveries will be made whose sole

utility consists in the gratification of curiosity. A common utensil, of little dignity or use, has sometimes exercised the conjectural ingenuity of the antiquary, to the diversion of those who have not imbibed a congenial spirit. But however contemptible the discovery of trifling objects may have been, when considered in itself, it has acquired a degree of value by the general and probable consequence. It has often led to objects of real importance, by suggesting hints which might never have occurred, had not the inquiry been commenced and prosecuted with vigour. And the maxim established in a less liberal pursuit, that the smallest gains are not to be neglected by him who endeavours to amass a fortune, must be steadily attended to in a successful pursuit of knowledge.

And, indeed, allowing that many of the results of antiquarian sagacity are not of high importance, yet will not this concession tend to render the study of antiquities a contemptible employment. It is a fruitful source of the pleasures of imagination. That lively faculty of the human mind is greatly delighted with the effort it makes in turning back to past ages, in being intimately conversant with manners and characters totally different from the present, in bringing back to view scenes that have long vanished, and tracing the progress of human improvements from their embryo state to their comparative maturity.

That which affords this species and degree of pleasure is highly worthy of cultivation. For it may with justice be asserted, that they who judge scarcely any thing worthy of serious pursuit which is not attended with evident and palpable profit, are too severe in their restrictions. Their conceptions are certainly too limited, when they circumscribe advantage within the bounds of personal or even

public emolument. Every intellectual effort which calls off the attention from less refined avocations, every liberal study which furnishes an innocent pleasure, is useful, as it is favourable to virtue by adding to the number of safe indulgences.

NO. LXXIV.—OBJECTIONS TO THE STUDY OF ANTIQUITIES WHEN IMPROPERLY PURSUED.

To arraign any part of those studies which exercise the talents of the liberal and ingenious, is by no means a desirable province. Under certain circumstances, and with due restrictions, they are all in a high degree laudable. But since excellence admits gradations, and since even estimable qualities and virtuous exertions are rendered blameable by excess, it becomes expedient to point out the line which separates fictitious from real utility, and to rescind those redundancies, which, like a morbid excrescence on a beautiful body, superinduce deformity on grace, and give an alloy to intrinsic value. Such an attempt, instead of extenuating, will tend to enhance the worth of those things which are really valuable.

These ideas will perhaps justify us in reviewing the objections which may be made to the pursuits of the antiquary. Though these pursuits are unquestionably too respectable to be condemned in general, yet their perversion and their excess afford ample scope for liberal censure.

That the studies of the antiquary have afforded matter for comic ridicule is not to be wondered at, when it is considered with how serious an air he has usually descanted on trifling subjects. An implement originally contemptible, and rendered still

more worthless by decay, no sooner falls into the hands of the admirer of ancient remains, than it excites a degree of admiration approaching to idolatry, and furnishes matter for a profound dissertation. Many fanciful conjectures are formed, a thousand collateral hints suggested, and a decisive sentence at last pronounced with the formal process of dictatorial authority. After all the learning displayed and sagacity exerted, it not unusually happens that a spectator, under the guidance of common sense, discovers that what has given rise to so much discussion is of modern fabric and invention, accidentally or artfully disguised.—Among the various modes of acquiring money invented by the restless mind of man, it has been one to imitate the effects of time, to make an artificial rust, to accelerate decay, and deceive the antiquary.

Few studies are so much exposed to the delusion of forgery as those of antiquities. Though the antiquary has sometimes made his palate the criterion of a genuine rust, and has been able to taste the difference between Roman or Attic *ærugo*, and the sophisticated pollution of the modern counterfeit; yet, by the temporary indisposition of the organs of taste, he has often been known to admit into his invaluable collection pieces of less value and of less antiquity than the lowest coin of the current specie. Many an Otho has been fabricated by a modern copper-smith, who has turned his base metal to good account by converting it into the twelve Cæsars. And a piece of brass, cried down as too base to pass with the stamp of a modern monarch, has become current and valuable among antiquaries as the coin of a Roman emperor.

Nor is a full dependence to be placed on those archives and written memorials, on the authenticity of which modern history most confidently relies.

An instance of the facility with which an appearance of antiquity can be given to the parchment has occurred in our own times and country. The late ingenious, but unfortunate, author of the pretended poems of Rowley was able not only to imitate the modes of writing which prevailed among our ancestors, but to colour the parchment with the spurious marks of antiquity in so artful a manner as to deceive even those who were conversant in ancient writings, and who were justly esteemed for their superior penetration. And the misfortune is, that, as the love of antiquities becomes more prevalent, the multitude of such impositions increases from the hope of additional reward. The pleasure which some have found in successful deception has given rise to wanton forgery; and, while a great share of attention continues to be paid to the relicks of past ages, such deceits will abound, because they are easy to invent, and are productive of gain. They who are best able to repay the labours of ingenious research, are often most exposed to the delusions of the artful, by that degree of sanguine ardour which they possess, and which is wholly incompatible with the exercise of discernment.

To assert that history has seldom received valuable light from the studies of the antiquary, is to indulge in declamatory invective at the expense of veracity. And yet it must be confessed, that the accession to real and important knowledge has scarcely been proportionate to the labour exerted. Curiosity has been abundantly gratified; but it does not appear that many of the discoveries which have afforded pleasure have been attended with any other consequence greatly desirable. It does not appear that much light has been derived from them for the direction of manual arts, for the illustration of physical phænomena, for the regulation of manners,

for the embellishment or for the accommodation of life. That degree of ingenuity and perseverance which might have made valuable improvements in all these departments, has been often wasted in dull musæums, and lavished away in producing unsatisfactory conjectures on subjects where even obvious truth would be unimportant. The boasted information of ancient coins and marbles is for the most part imperfect, often equivocal, and sometimes unintelligible. The perspicacious eye of an antiquary has, indeed, discovered inscriptions satisfactory to himself, but which could neither be seen nor acknowledged by the more obtuse vision of a common observer. Inscriptions thus ambiguous, and information thus obscure, though they may give scope for ingenious conjecture, and amuse the curious, can seldom afford solid support, or give clear illustration to the page of history.

With respect to the collector of that kind of relicks which were at first of no value, are attended with no useful consequence near or remote, and derive all their power of exciting esteem from the marks of that duration which has occasioned their decay, he certainly has done discredit to the study of antiquities. He has pursued trifles with an ardour justifiable only in important business, and consumed time and ingenuity in effecting no adequate purpose. By the discerning part of mankind he will be classed in the same rank with the admirer of a trinket, the hunter of a butterfly, the cultivator of a flower, and the connoisseur in mosses. Such pursuits we acknowledge to be harmless; and the praise usually terminates in that single epithet. He who venerates a contemptible relick is actuated with a degree of the pilgrim's superstition, less pernicious, indeed, in its effects, but scarcely less absurd in its principle.

But let not the justice of liberal and candid censure be disgraced by indiscriminate and general invective. From the researches of those who have brought to light the antiquities of ancient Greece and Rome, from our own Potter and Kennet, our scholastic studies derive daily assistance. It is easy to enumerate the names of many who have very successfully laboured in this department. Our own country can display a long list of illustrious antiquaries, who have judiciously trodden in the footsteps of a Camden, a Leland, and a Hearne. It must at the same time be lamented, that it can exhibit a great number, who, by perverting the pursuit, have rendered it ridiculous.

Raillery and censure are, perhaps, more frequently misplaced and ill-directed than applause. They have often been carried to excess, and pointed at wrong objects, when they have chosen the study of antiquities for the display of their poignancy. The attack should be levelled only at abuses and perversion. The correction of these will restore its proper dignity to the study of antiquities, and cause the shafts of ridicule which have been successfully thrown at it to recoil on the aggressors. The result will be, that the attention which is due to real excellence and experienced utility, will cease to be paid to objects which possess only an imaginary value, derived from an equivocal or supposititious source, the ideal merit of a long duration.

NO. LXXV.—ON THE NECESSITY OF AN ATTENTION TO THINGS AS WELL AS BOOKS, EXEMPLIFIED IN THE INSTANCE OF A FELLOW OF A COLLEGE. [IN A LETTER.]

SIR,

AFTER thirty years constant residence at the university, I thought myself supremely happy when I was at last presented by my college to a living worth two hundred a year. During so long a period, I had treasured up many ideas for the regulation of my future conduct, and congratulated myself that my theory was now to be reduced to practice.

I found my parsonage-house a large antiquated building, in a delightful situation, and capable of very great improvement. I had been used to see every thing around me in the best order, and had acquired a love of decency and some degree of ornament, in all the articles of dress and habitation. I sent, therefore, without delay, for the builder, and gave him an unlimited order to repair every thing in a style of becoming elegance. The work was done entirely to my mind; and I had nothing to find fault with but the bill, which came to three times the sum mentioned in the estimate, and almost exhausted the little savings of a collegiate life.

My garden was laid out in gravel walks, intersecting each other in right angles, and its only ornaments were a few yew-trees clipped into peacocks. I ordered every tree and plant to be rooted up, the walks to be turned to serpentine, and the whole to be planted with the most beautiful shrubs. A close of about an acre at the bottom lay so contiguous, that it tempted me to add it to the garden. No labour or ingenuity was spared; and I own I felt a little satisfaction in a consciousness of possessing the

grounds about me in a state superior to the esquire himself. In the ardour of reformation it did not occur that I was not only expending more than I could afford, but involving myself in a necessity of keeping an additional and skilful servant constantly to superintend my improvements. I had neglected utility for ornaments, and had planted the fir and the laurel instead of the fruit-tree and the pot-herb. After incurring some ridicule of the neighbourhood, I was obliged to change my shrubbery to a cabbage-garden, and to resume my close as a pasture-ground for my poney.

I no sooner settled, than it was suggested to me by an attorney who wanted business, that my living was worth much more than I should receive, and that I owed it to myself and successors to receive the tithes in kind. I entered on the project with great zeal, built a barn, and bought a cart; but in a meeting of farmers, not one of whom could read or write his own name, I was talked out of the scheme, and prevailed on to let my living for life two-thirds under its real value.

I had ever entertained exalted ideas of the utility and pleasure of Old English hospitality, and had promised myself a plentiful table whenever I should become master of a house. The best of wines, the best of provisions, were brought to it; and these were allurements that prevented the possibility of its being deserted. The neighbouring gentlemen liked both my port and ale, and I was so happy as to give them satisfaction with my Madeira; a circumstance which, though it pleased them and me at the time, was a subject of some uneasiness to my wine-merchant, who found that a pipe a-year was a great tax on an annual income of two hundred pounds.

The baker's, butcher's, and maltster's bills were a kind of manuscripts never met with in the Bodleian,

and to the perusal of which I was quite unused. I had much rather have collated a dozen Greek copies, than have cast up a sum consisting of a dozen articles. This disinclination soon introduced a perplexity in my accounts which I was too indolent to unravel, till at last an accumulation of debt required a degree of œconomy to which my spirit could not without difficulty submit.

I had been used for thirty years to scarcely any interruption save the tinkling of the chapel and the dinner bell, and could not help being disgusted at the noise of servants and the bustle of a family. Amid the din which was seldom interrupted, how often did I wish myself transported to the blissful region of the common room fire-side! Delightful retreat! where never female showed her head since the days of the founder!

There was one circumstance attending my new situation, which, though only an imaginary evil, gave me at first a sensible mortification. As a senior fellow, I was a little monarch within the verge of my college. The statutes had required that persons of the lower degrees should pass before me, nay, stand in the quadrangle, whenever I was present, with heads uncovered. From this general obeisance, and from many other circumstances, I had been led to conceive myself a person of great importance. I was so, indeed, in the circumscribed limits of my society. But the misfortune was, that I could not easily free myself from the consciousness of it when no longer a member, and expected a similar degree of deference from all I met, which cannot be paid in the busy world without inconvenience.

Though by no means remarkable for diffidence at college, I felt myself awkward and uneasy when admitted into the company of those who were styled

the polite. I had thought and read upon most subjects; yet I found my remarks less attended to in a fashionable circle than those of the confessedly illiterate. Matter I possessed; but the manner was wanting. That easy kind of trifling which pleases without fatiguing the attention of the superficial, was not among my academical acquirements. Thus, with a great inclination, and some ability, to join in general conversation and intercourse, I was almost reduced to a state of solitude, and wished in vain for the frank and good-natured associates of the common room.

Upon the whole, my condition is far less happy and less respectable than I had reason to hope. I have discovered, when it is almost too late, that I had confined my views within too narrow limits, by attending only to the affairs of a college. I have learned the necessity of studying things with all the attention paid to an abstruse science; and will recommend it to those whose prospects in life are similar to mine, to devote some part of their time to the consideration of common affairs; of a few mechanic arts, such as concern building, repairing, gardening; of agriculture, and of the manners of husbandmen, with whom, in the business of tithes, they will be obliged to negociate. They will thus not only spend the close of their lives with more pleasure to themselves, but will more effectually accomplish the ends of the clerical profession.

Of the imprudence of a contrary conduct, I stand a melancholy instance. I am left alone at a time when the amusement of companions is most wanted to help out the last stage in the journey of life. I am both deserted and defrauded. I remain in a total ignorance of the world, at a period when others are become wise by experience; and I am involved

in the mistakes of youth, without its amiable qualities to palliate them.

NO. LXXVI.—ON THE INFLUENCE OF FASHION.

They who are exempted by their elevated condition from the confinement of commercial and professional life, involve themselves in voluntary slavery by engaging in the service of the tyrant, Fashion. They are compelled to abstain from actions in themselves pleasing and innocent, however strong their inclination to them, because the caprice of some distinguished character has prohibited them by his example. Like the dullest of animals, they are driven round the same circle, from which once to deviate would subject them to an appellation of all others the most formidable. To be called profligate, extravagant, intemperate, or even wicked, might be tolerated with patience; but who could bear to live with the epithet of ungenteel?

People of fashion, once admitted to this honourable title, form a little world of their own, and learn to look down upon all others as beings of a subordinate nature. It is, then, a natural question, In what does this superiority consist? It arises not from learning; for the most illiterate claim it, and are indulged in the claim: it arises not from virtue; for the most vicious are not excluded. Wealth, beauty, birth, and elegance, are not the only qualifications for it; because many enjoy it who have no just pretension to either, and many are denied it who possess them all. It seems to be a combination of numbers under two or three leaders in high life, who agree to imitate each other, and to maintain,

by the majority of voices and the effrontery of pride, that all they do is proper, and all they say is sensible; that their dress is becoming, their manners polite, their houses tasteful, their furniture, their carriages, all that appertains to them, the models and standards of real beauty. Those who come not within the pale of their jurisdiction they condemn, with papal authority, to perpetual insignificance. They stigmatize them, in the aggregate, as people whom nobody knows, as the scum of the earth, as born only to minister to their pride, and to supply the wants of their luxury.

Groundless as are the pretensions of this confederacy, no pains are avoided to become an adopted member. For this, the stripling squanders his patrimony, and destroys his constitution. For this, the virgin bloom of innocence and beauty is withered at the vigils of the card-table. For this, the loss of integrity, and public infamy, are willingly incurred; and it is agreed by many, that it were better to go out of the world, than to live in it and be unfashionable.

If this distinction be really valuable, and if the happiness or misery of life depend upon obtaining or losing it, then are the thousands who walk the private paths of life objects of the sincerest pity. Some consolation must be devised for the greater part of the community, who have never breathed the atmosphere of St. James's, nor embarrassed their fortunes, nor ruined their health, in pursuit of this glorious elevation. Perhaps on an impartial review it will appear, that these are really possessed of that happiness which vanity would arrogate to itself, and yet only seems to obtain.

The middle ranks of mankind are the most virtuous, the best accomplished, and the most capable of enjoying the pleasures and advantages which fall

to the lot of human nature. It is not the least of these, that they are free from the necessity of attending to those formalities which engross the attention and waste the time of the higher classes, without any adequate return of solid satisfaction. Horace, who was far less illustrious by his birth and station than by his elegance of manners, was wont to congratulate himself, that he could ride on a little mule to the remotest town in Italy without ridicule or molestation; while his patrons could hardly move a step but with the unwieldy pomp of an equipage and retinue. The single article of dress, which, when splendid, requires the labour and attention of many hours, becomes a wretched task to those who wish to employ their time with honour, with improvement, with pleasure, and the possibility of a satisfactory retrospection.

Visits of form, of which every one complains, yet to which every one in some measure submits, are absolutely necessary to keep up the union of the fashionable confederacy. The more numerous, the more honourable. To be permitted to spend five minutes, or to leave a card at the houses of half the inhabitants of the politer streets, is a felicity which compensates all the trouble of attendance and tedious preparation. To behold a train of coaches, some perhaps with coronets on their sides, crowding to their door, to hear the fulminations of a skilful footman, are joys of which the inhabitants of a rural retreat have little conception, but which delightfully affect the fine feelings of those who are made of purer clay, and honoured with the name of fashionable.

From this severe persecution the man who aspires not at such honours is happily free. He visits his friend and neighbour because he feels friendly sentiments for him, and is received with cordiality.

The intervals of company he can devote to study, and to the pursuit of business and amusement; for his communications with his friends require not the long, tedious, preparatory trouble of fashionable formality. In the unreserved pleasures of conversation, he looks with reciprocal pity on formal visitors of the squares in the metropolis, nor envies those who knock at a hundred doors in an evening, and who possess the glorious privilege of sitting half an hour in the company of those who must speak, and look, and move by rule without reason.

The effects of fashion constitute, in the moral world, very wonderful phænomena. Fashion can transform deformity to beauty, and beauty to deformity. When we view the dresses in a picture-gallery, we are tempted to ridicule the shocking taste of our grandfathers and grandmothers; and yet there is not the least doubt but that they appeared beautiful and becoming when they were worn, and that the garb of the spectator who now censures them, would have been then equally ridiculous. During the short period of a life, the fluctuations of taste in dress are strikingly remarkable. A small buckle or a large buckle, a short coat or a long coat, a high or a low head-dress, appear in their turns, in the course of only a few years, laughably absurd. Manners, books, poetry, painting, building, gardening, undergo a similar alteration. The prevailing taste is at the time supposed to be the perfect taste: a few years revolve, and it is exploded as monstrous. A new one is adopted; that also is soon despised: and the old one, in the capricious vicissitudes of the innovating spirit, is once more revived, to repeat its revolution.

There is certainly a standard of rectitude in manners, decorum, and taste; but it is more easily discovered than preserved. The vanity of the great

and opulent will ever be affecting new modes, in order to increase that notice to which it thinks itself exclusively entitled. The lower ranks will imitate them as soon as they have discovered the innovation. —Whether right or wrong, beautiful or deformed, in the essential nature of things, is of little moment. The pattern is set by a superior; and authority will at any time countenance absurdity. A hat, a coat, a shoe, deemed fit to be worn only by a great grandsire, is no sooner put on by a dictator of fashions, than it becomes graceful in the extreme, and is generally adopted from the first lord of the Treasury to the apprentice in Houndsditch.

It must be allowed, indeed, that while Fashion exerts her arbitrary power in matters which tend not to the corruption of morals, or of taste in the fine arts, she may be suffered to exercise her wayward fancy without limitation. But the misfortune is, that, like other potentates, she will encroach on provinces where her jurisdiction is usurped. The variations she is continually introducing in dress are of service in promoting commerce. The whims of the rich feed the poor. The variety and the restlessness caused by changes in the modes of external embellishment, contribute to please and employ those whose luxurious indolence and personal insignificance prevent them from finding more manly objects and more rational entertainment. But when the same caprice which gives law to the wardrobe extends itself to the library; when the legislature of an assembly dictates in the schools, regulates religion, and directs education, it is time that reason should vindicate her rights against the encroachments of folly.

Yet so fascinating is the influence of general example, that many who possess reason in an improved state are known to follow fashion with blind obedi-

ence. The scholar and the philosopher are hurried away with the rapidity of the torrent. To stand singular, is to present a mark for the shafts of scorn and malevolence. For the sake of ease, therefore, men are induced to join the throng, which they must resist without success, but not without receiving injury in the conflict. Compliance is thought wisdom, where opposition is likely to be inefficacious, and sure to give offence.

With respect to the distinction claimed by people of fashion, it is certain that they who are elevated by station, fortune, and a correspondent education, are often distinguished by a peculiar elegance of manners resulting from their education and society. But this ought not to inspire pride, or teach them to separate from the rest of mankind. It should give them a spirit of benevolence, and lead them to promote the happiness of others, in return for the bountiful goodness of Providence in bestowing on them superior advantages, without any original or natural merit of their own. They should endeavour to convince themselves, that the warmest philanthropist is the truest gentleman, and that the most becoming fashion is to do all the good they can to individuals and to their country.

NO. LXXVII.—ON SOME PARTS OF THE DISCIPLINE IN OUR ENGLISH UNIVERSITIES.

OUR English universities are held in high esteem among foreigners; and indeed, considering the number of great men who have received a part of their education in them, and their opulent establishments of colleges and professorships, they are really respectable. I have, therefore, been the more disposed

to lament, that the *public exercises* should be so futile and absurd, as to deserve not only the severity of censure, but the utmost poignancy of ridicule.

Reverence, it has been justly remarked, is always increased by the distance of the object. The world at large, who hear of colleges like palaces devoted to learning, of princely estates bequeathed for the support of professors, of public libraries and schools for every science, are inclined to view the consecrated place in which they abound with peculiar veneration. Accidental visitors, also, who behold the superb dining-halls, painted chapels, the luxurious common rooms, the elegant chambers, and a race of mortals, in a peculiar dress, strutting through the streets with a solemn air of importance; when they see all the doctors, both the proctors, with all the heads of colleges and halls, in solemn procession, with their velvet sleeves, scarlet gowns, hoods, black, red, and purple—cannot but be struck with the appearance, and are naturally led to conclude, that here, at length, wisdom, science, learning, and whatever else is praise-worthy, for ever flourish and abound.

Without entering into an invidious and particular examination of the subject, me may cursorily observe, that, after all this pompous ostentation and this profuse expense, the public has not, of late at least, been indebted for the greatest improvements in science and learning to all the doctors, both the proctors, nor to all the heads of colleges and halls laid together. That populous university, London, and that region of literary labour, Scotland, have seized almost every palm of scholastic honour, and left the sons of Oxford and Cambridge to enjoy substantial comforts in the smoke of the common or combination room. The bursar's books are the only manuscripts of any value produced in many

colleges; and the sweets of pensions, exhibitions, fines, fellowships, and petty offices, the chief objects of academical pursuit.

If I were to enter into the many laughable absurdities of collegiate life and university institutions, as they now stand, I should exceed the limits of my paper. It is my intention at present only to acquaint the public with the exercises, which one celebrated seat of the Muses requires of those who seek the envied honour of a Master of Arts' degree. I speak not from displeasure or resentment; but voluntarily incur the odium of many persons attached by interest and connexions to the universities, with no other motive than the desire of removing the disgrace of those noble establishments, by exposing the futility of the exercises to public animadversion.

The youth whose heart pants for the honour of a Bachelor of Arts' degree must wait patiently till near four years have revolved. But this time is not to be spent idly. No; he is obliged, during this period, once to oppose, and once to respond, in disputations held in the public schools—a formidable sound, and a dreadful idea; but, on closer attention, the fear will vanish, and contempt supply its place.

This opposing and responding is termed, in the cant of the place, *doing generals*. Two boys, or men, as they call themselves, agree to *do generals* together. The first step in this mighty work is to procure arguments. These are always handed down, from generation to generation, on long slips of paper, and consist of foolish syllogisms on foolish subjects, of the formation or the signification of which the respondent and opponent seldom know more than an infant in swaddling-clothes. The next step is to go for a *liceat* to one of the petty officers, called

the Regent-Master of the Schools, who subscribes his name to the questions, and receives sixpence as his fee. When the important day arrives, the two doughty disputants go into a large dusty room full of dirt and cobwebs, with walls and wainscot decorated with the names of former disputants, who, to divert the tedious hours, cut out their names with their pen-knives, or wrote verses with a pencil. Here they sit in mean desks, opposite to each other, from one o'clock till three. Not once in a hundred times does any university officer enter; and, when he does, he hears one syllogism or two, and then makes a bow, and departs, as he came and remained, in solemn silence. The disputants then return to the amusement of cutting the desks, carving their names, or reading Sterne's Sentimental Journey, or some other edifying novel. When this exercise is duly performed by both parties, they have a right to the title and insignia of *Sophs;* but not before they have been formally *created* by one of the regent-masters, before whom they kneel, while he lays a volume of Aristotle's works on their heads, and puts on a hood, a piece of black crape, hanging from their necks down to their heels; which crape, it is expressly ordained by a statute in this case made and provided, shall be plain, and unadorned either with wool or with fur.

The next exercise is called *doing juraments,* which consists of just stepping into the school, and *proposing one syllogism*, for the sake of complying with the *letter of the statute;* and this *noble* exercise is termed *doing juraments*, which, being interpreted, signifies *the evading of one's oath.*

This work once done, a great progress is made towards the wished-for honour of a bachelor's degree. There remain only one or two trifling forms,

and another disputation almost exactly similar to *doing generals*, but called *answering under bachelor*, previous to the awful examination.

Every candidate is obliged to be examined in the whole circle of the sciences by three masters of arts, *of his own choice*. The examination is to be holden in one of the public schools, and to continue from nine o'clock till eleven. The masters take a most solemn oath, that they will examine properly and impartially. Dreadful as all this appears, there is always found to be more of appearance in it than reality; for the greatest dunce usually gets his *testimonium* signed with as much ease and credit as the finest genius. The manner of proceeding is as follows: The poor young man to be examined in the sciences often knows no more of them than his bed-maker, and the masters who examine are sometimes equally unacquainted with such mysteries. But *schemes*, as they are called, or little books, containing forty or fifty questions in each science, are handed down from age to age, from one to another. The candidate to be examined employs three or four days in learning these by heart, and the examiners, having done the same before him when they were examined, know what questions to ask; and so all goes on smoothly. When the candidate has displayed his universal knowledge of the sciences, he is to display his skill in philology. One of the masters, therefore, desires him to construe a passage in some Greek or Latin classic, which he does with no interruption, just as he pleases, and as well as he can. The statutes next require, that he should translate familiar English phrases into Latin. And now is the time when the masters shew their wit and jocularity. Droll questions are put on any subject, and the puzzled candidate furnishes diversion by his awkward embarrassment. I have known

the questions on this occasion to consist of an inquiry into the pedigree of a race-horse. And it is a common question, after asking what is the *summum bonum* of various sects of philosophers, to ask what is the *summum bonum*, or chief good, among Oxonians; to which the answer is such as Mimnermus would give. This familiarity, however, only takes place when the examiners are pot-companions of the candidate, which, indeed, is usually the case; for it is reckoned good management to get acquainted with two or three jolly young masters of arts, and supply them well with port, previously to the examination. If the vice-chancellor and proctors happen to enter the school, a very uncommon event, then a little solemnity is put on, very much to the confusion of the masters as well as of the boy, who is sitting in the little box opposite to them. As neither the officer, nor any one else, usually enters the room (for it is reckoned very *ungenteel*), the examiners and the candidates often converse on the last drinking-bout, or on horses, or read the newspaper, or a novel, or divert themselves as well as they can in any manner, till the clock strikes eleven, when all parties descend, and the *testimonium* is signed by the masters. With this *testimonium* in his possession, the candidate is sure of success. The day in which the honour is to be conferred arrives; he appears in the Convocation-house, he takes an abundance of oaths, pays a sum of money in fees, and, after kneeling down before the vice-chancellor, and whispering a lie, rises up a Bachelor of Arts!

And now, if he aspires at higher honours, (and what emulous spirit can sit down without aspiring at them?) new labours and new difficulties are to be encountered during the space of three years. He must *determine* in Lent, he must *do quodlibets*,

he must *do austins*, he must declaim twice, he must read six solemn lectures, and he must be again examined in the sciences, before he can be promoted to the degree of Master of Arts.

None but the initiated can know what *determining*, *doing quodlibets*, and *doing austins*, mean. I have not room to enter into a minute description of such contemptible *minutiæ*. Let it be sufficient to say, that these exercises consist of disputations, and the disputations of syllogisms, procured and uttered nearly in the same places, time, and manner, as we have already seen them in *doing generals*. There is, however, a great deal of trouble in little formalities, such as procuring sixpenny *liceats*, sticking up the names on the walls, sitting in large empty rooms by yourself, or with some poor wight as ill employed as yourself, without any thing to say or do; wearing hoods, and a little piece of lamb-skin with the wool on it; and a variety of other particulars too tedious and too trifling to be worthy of enumeration.

The declamations would be useful exercises, if they were not always performed in a careless and evasive manner. The lectures are always called *Wall* Lectures, because the lecturer has no other audience but the walls. Indeed, he usually steals a sheet or two of Latin out of some old book, no matter on what subject, though it ought to be on natural philosophy. These he keeps in his pocket, in order to take them out and read away, if a proctor should come in; but, otherwise, he sits by himself, and solaces himself, if he pleases, with a book, not from the Bodleian but the circulating library.

The examination is performed exactly in the same manner as before described; and though represented as very formidable, is such an one as a boy from a good school just entered may go through

as well as after a seven years' residence. Few, however, reside; for the majority are what are called *term-trotters*, that is, persons who only keep the terms for form-sake, or spend six or eight weeks in a year in the university to qualify them for degrees, according to the letter of the statutes.

After all these important exercises and trials, and after again taking oaths by wholesale, and paying the fees, the academic is honoured with a Master's degree, and sallies forth into the world with this undeniable passport to carry him through it with credit.

Exercises of a nature equally silly and obsolete are performed, in a similar manner, for the other degrees; but I have neither time nor patience to enter into the detail.

And now I seriously repeat, that what I have said proceeds from no other motive than a wish to see the glory of the universities unsullied by the disgrace of requiring, with ridiculous solemnity, a set of childish and useless exercises. They raise no emulation, they confer no honour, they promote no improvement. They give a great deal of trouble, they waste much time, and they render the university contemptible to its own members. I have the honour, such as it is, to be a member of the university of Oxford, and a master of arts in it. I know the advantages of the place; but I also know its more numerous and weighty disadvantages; and the confidence the public has already placed in me, makes it a duty to inform them of every thing in which the general state of morals and literature is greatly concerned. I have done this duty; nor shall I regard the unjust displeasure of all the doctors, both the proctors, nor of all the heads of colleges and halls, with their respective societies.

"As to the imprudence of this undertaking," to

use the words of an able but unfortunate writer, Amhurst, "I confess it to be such, and that I have all along proceeded without a single view to my own interest, without any promise or expectation of the smallest reward, even that of being presented to a doctor's degree by the university, in return for all my industry, and the pains which I have taken in its behalf.

"The worldly wise, and the prudent of this generation, consider things only as they respect their temporal interest and advantage, without any regard to right or wrong, truth or falsehood, any farther than they conduce to their corrupt purposes and selfish aims. But it is the part of a scholar and an honest man to consider things intrinsically, and to make truth, reason, and equity, the standards of all his determinations."

[It is justice to add, that since the above essay was written, in the warm zeal which a young mind felt for the honour of the universities, several important reforms have taken place at Oxford. I claim no merit in the alteration: I merely mention the fact. Let others bestow the praise where the praise is due.

Many, indeed, have been partial enough to attribute the late reform at Oxford in some degree to this paper, and to others on similar topics in a book entitled Liberal Education. I rejoice at the reform, though it is by no means complete. As to the praise—Deo optimo maximo sit omnis laus et gloria.]

NO. LXXVIII.—ON THE FEAR OF GROWING OLD.

Among the various follies by which we increase the natural and unavoidable miseries of life, is the dread

of approaching age. The sight of a gray hair has often caused a severer pang than the loss of a child or a husband. After a certain age, every returning birth-day is saluted with silent sorrow, and we conceal the number of our years with as much solicitude as the consciousness of an atrocious crime.

This weakness arises, in a great measure, from a defective education. They who have never been taught to consider any thing valuable but youth, beauty, and the pleasures of dissipation, will naturally feel themselves reduced to a state of despondency when they behold all for which life appears worth possessing on the eve of departure. That middle age, at which all powers of the mind and body are in complete perfection, is loathed as if it were the age of decrepitude. The boundaries of life, by nature sufficiently circumscribed, are still farther contracted by the empty votary of fashion; and from threescore and ten it shrinks to thirty. It has been currently reported, that many fashionable beauties have expressed a devout wish, that they might not survive their thirtieth birth-day. To sink in the horizon of the gay world, and to see other suns soaring in all the glorious majesty of youth and beauty, was more than they imagined their delicate natures could possibly sustain.

But as life is sweet, and death not always exorable, they and their many imitators will probably be inclined to live on, even when they are arrived at the formidable age of thrice ten years. It will, then, be but common charity to endeavour to convince them, that there are methods which may render the long and dismal period which is to follow not only comfortable to themselves, but agreeable to others. They will not any longer be under the necessity of dressing at sixty in the garb of sixteen, nor of painting and patching a shrivelled skin, nor of

spending that time at the looking-glass which should be devoted to the mirror and the beauty of holiness.

For the enjoyment of the space from thirty to threescore, it will be necessary to have laid in a stock of good humour. But the temper must be cultivated at an early age, in order to be cultivated with success. The years from eight to eighteen must not be exclusively devoted to external ornament, and the arts of catching admiration. Many efforts must be made during this period, to overcome spite, envy, peevishness, stubbornness, sullenness, and all those ugly qualities, which, though they may lie dormant while youth and beauty secure submission, will afterwards break out in all the fulness of their horrors, when flattery is silent, and admiration no more. But good humour, duly cherished, will rise to supply the charms of departed beauty; and good sense, properly improved, will leave no part of life without the means of pleasing and receiving pleasure.

There is no method of inspiring good humour and good sense so effectual as that of forming a taste for polite letters and polite arts at an early age. EMOLLIT MORES. Whatever pleases habitually, equably, and innocently, cannot fail to sweeten the temper. Books, besides that they are usually addressed to the taste, and on that account possess a beneficial influence on the temper, abound with maxims and with precepts of sovereign efficacy in the improvement of the heart, the temper, and the understanding. Drawing and music, seriously and attentively pursued, are peculiarly efficacious in refining, exalting, and sweetening the disposition. Every thing, indeed, which addresses itself to the finer faculties of the human constitution, has, in some degree, this valuable effect; and she who has been early taught to value the beauties of the mind, will find its

graces expanding to their highest perfection at the very age in which the blossoms of personal beauty wither and decay.

If, as we grow old, we grow wiser and better, surely we shall have no reason to repine, since our real happiness is always proportioned to our wisdom and our goodness; and we can scarcely avoid growing wiser and better by age, if our minds have been early improved with learning, and duly tinctured with virtue and religion. Time and experience naturally lead to improvement; and, if our hearts are rightly disposed, we shall find in the conscious improvement of our minds and morals one of the sweetest pleasures of which our nature is capable.

However unreasonable the excessive dread of approaching old age in either sex, it is certainly more excusable, on many accounts, in women than in men. In men it is a mark of weakness, want of principle, and want of sense. Yet how many do we daily see with wrinkled brows and bloodless cheeks, and tottering legs and hoary locks, decorating their walking skeletons with cosmetic arts, and haunting every scene of vice and vanity with all the wantonness of a stripling of eighteen! There is a natural dignity, authority, and beauty, in old age, honourably supported, which such men resign for that absurd affectation of youth, which can only render them wretched and ridiculous.

To consider the advanced periods of life as of no value, argues a great defect of religious principle. They constitute the proper season for the pleasures of devotion and of practical piety. They furnish a most desirable opportunity for advancing our nature to all attainable perfection, and fulfilling the best purposes of our existence. They enable us to aspire after and to obtain that beauty which shall

not pass away, and that youth which shall be immortal.

NO. LXXIX.—CURSORY CONSIDERATIONS ON ARCHITECTURE.

THE origin of building was but little posterior to the origin of mankind. Man, naked and defenceless as he came from the hand of nature, soon found it necessary to shelter himself from the inclemency of the weather, from the attacks of wild beasts, and from the invasion of his savage neighbours. He could not lie down to sleep with security till he had formed a hut, which, however rude and inartificial, might serve the purposes of shelter and defence. If his own wants and natural ingenuity were not sufficient to instruct him how to build, he might learn from the irrational creation. The swallow's nest, and the bee's hive, suggested hints which he might adopt and improve; but this original species of building, directed by no rules, and destitute of elegance and proportion, cannot properly be said to be the work of art, or to merit the appellation of Architecture. It was, however, the embryo of those noble edifices which have since adorned all civilised countries.

To the first great works of architecture, Ægypt, ever fertile in the productions of art as well as of nature, is recorded to have given rise. Several of them are extant at this day, and are too generally known to admit of reiterated description. They excite those ideas which arise from magnificence of design, not from delicacy or elegance; and they rather astonish by their grandeur than please by their beauty.

But the taste for works of useless bulk and un-

wieldy magnitude could not long prevail. Some adequate end was required to justify labour and expense. It is natural to suppose, and the event has verified the conjecture, that some of the earliest efforts of the art would be devoted to religion. The pyramids of Ægypt are, indeed, with great probability, supposed by Mr. Bryant to have been temples. The magnificence of the temple was well adapted to excite sublime ideas of the Deity; and it seems to have been an early received opinion, that the greatest human skill and industry could not be more properly exerted than to display the glory of Omnipotence.

From the temples of the gods, to palaces and public edifices, designed for general debate, and for judicial and legislative transactions, the transition was easy and gradual. Even in the dwellings of private persons, the art was displayed with minute elegance as well as magnificent splendour. As wealth accumulated, and the arts improved, it was natural to add to the original objects of building, which were convenience and safety, some degree of ornament. When the few wants of nature are satisfied, and the dangers of a savage state removed, the restless mind of man creates artificial objects of desire. No sooner are the cravings of necessity silenced, than the calls of imagination gain attention. Taste becomes importunate when the animal appetites are at rest. At an advanced period of society, it was not enough that the habitation was large, strong, and durable: it was now required to be not only safe and commodious, but ornamental. Men of liberal and elegant minds, whose education, genius, and possessions, enabled them either to design or execute, soon devoted themselves to the study of that symmetry, and form of beauty, which excites pleasing sensations in the mind of man.

Persons of this turn, and under circumstances favourable to its exertion, were, however, in the early ages, but thinly scattered on the face of the globe. A just taste in architecture was confined, at one time, to the comparatively small country of ancient Greece. The greater part of mankind continued long in a state of barbarism, and consequent insecurity, most unfavourable to the progress of elegance and refinement: but the inhabitants of ancient Greece, formed, perhaps, by the partial hand of nature with feelings peculiarly susceptible of every kind of beauty, very early advanced the art of building to a degree of perfection which the united intellects of all the civilised world have not since been able to surpass. Men have, indeed, sometimes ventured, from motives of vanity or caprice, to deviate from these models; but have commonly returned to them soon, with a clear conviction of having lost sight of excellence in the pursuit of innovation.

Perfection has commonly followed invention at a long interval; and the best productions of art have seldom been universally, and without exception, well received: but the orders of architecture, invented by the Greeks, have never admitted real improvement by alteration; nor have they yet been beheld with disgust or disapprobation by a single individual. Fanciful changes in the capital of a column, or in trifling embellishments, have, indeed, frequently been adopted; but though they might please the vanity of the artist, and be applauded by his partial admirers, yet have they seldom given satisfaction to the majority of spectators. Ignorance and dulness may have viewed the Grecian architecture with an indifference easily accounted for; but every sensible mind, though unacquainted with rules, and free from favourable prepossessions, feels

itself involuntarily soothed and elevated by the contemplation of it. Profusion of ornament, and complicated vastness, have never yet been able to cause that effect which is produced by SIMPLE MAGNIFICENCE. What is said of the Grecian architecture is to be extended to those additions which the Romans made, so similar to the primitive productions of Greece, that I do not separate them as constituting different styles, but class them, for the sake of simplicity, under one denomination.

Such, then, is the general characteristic of Grecian architecture, which, though it originally displayed that kind of beauty which seems, from the universality of its influence, congenial to the human mind, has been, at various times, lost by disuse, corrupted by vicious taste, and mutilated by ignorance. To trace it in the progress of its revolutions, and to treat with technical accuracy of the dimensions and particular modes of alteration, would be to invade the province of the architect and historian. It were to enter upon a detail jejune and uninteresting. I pretend not presumptuously to compose a didactic treatise, or a historical dissertation on the subject, but endeavour to express the feelings of an elegant though common spectator.

During that period of literary darkness which overspread all the nations of Europe, the ancient arts, from their intimate connexion with ancient learning, seem to have been involved in the general obscurity. Still, however, edifices for religious, for civil, for domestic purposes, were necessary; and the human mind, active even under disadvantageous circumstances, invented orders of architecture of which there existed no ancient model in Greece or Rome. Of these the learned antiquary is able to discriminate the specific differences, and to point out with accuracy the Gothic, the Saracenic, and

other styles, with all their temporary modifications. The general spectator, however, includes them all under the name of Gothic architecture; and, indeed, the great resemblance between them in many of their most striking features, and the common notions on the subject, in some measure justify the considering them as of the same tribe, accidentally diversified by that analogous irregularity, if we may so express it, which is often visible in the works of art as well as of nature.

The many venerable monuments which remain in our own country to testify the magnificence of our ancestors, enable every one to form an idea of the Gothic style from actual observation; and it must be confessed, that they bear evident marks of great skill, great labour, and great expense. Taste, since the builders of those times made little pretension to what is called a pure taste, and had few opportunities for its improvement, is not to be looked for in their works, and will, indeed, seldom be found. To the perfection of a building they seem at one time to have thought it necessary to exhibit the appearance of great manual labour in little decorations, and to dazzle the eye with gilding, sculpture, paint, and finery; a style which is called the *florid*, by those writers who have undertaken to discriminate with accuracy the various species of Gothic architecture. That any part could be great from its simplicity, and beautiful from its want of ornament, our ancestors had little apprehension: they had neither the models of classic antiquity before their eyes, nor the treatises of those philosophers at hand who have investigated the true causes of beauty and sublimity. No wonder, therefore, that the mason and the mechanic were suffered to display their dexterity in fanciful and capricious exertions. Difficulty of execution, and the appearance of uncommon la-

bour, were often the only criterions of excellence with the spectator, as well as with the artist, at a time when neither of them had opportunities of cultivating a refined taste, or of forming a solid judgement, either by precept or by example.

But the modern spectator has unavoidably become familiar with the Greek model, and, without any great effort, if he is not deficient in natural taste, acquires rules of judging of the fine arts according to truth and simplicity. On entering the Gothic abbey or the hall, he is indeed struck with ideas of solemnity, and is conscious of a gloomy grandeur. The fretted roof, the long-drawn aisle, the pointed arch, and the dim twilight from the narrow window, excite a species of emotions peculiarly adapted to the purposes of the cathedral. Perhaps, however, the air of antiquity which the Gothic piles of building have by this time acquired has at least an equal share in producing this effect on the observer. When he views the abbey merely as a work of architecture, without admitting religious or historical associations, and without indulging the prejudices of the antiquary, perhaps he no longer feels himself affected with delight, or particularly disposed to devotion. When he looks up without prejudice, he owns that, however extensive the area and vast the structure, his attention is drawn off from contemplating the grandeur of the whole by a *profusion of little ornaments*, whose angles offend the eye, and which destroy the unity of the object. A great multiplicity of ideas cannot severally make a due impression, and produce a proper effect, when they operate in conjunction. While we survey the complicated parts, we neglect the whole; and while we attend to the whole by abstracting the parts, which is neither an easy nor an agreeable effort, those lavish ornaments, of which the complicated parts

consist, become indifferent or disgusting, because useless, superfluous, and cumbersome. Instead of causing agreeable sensations, which ought to be a subordinate object in every building for public use, such edifices are found to raise ideas in some degree painful, from the distraction of mind which they occasion. Meanness is often the result where sublimity was expected, and littleness appears even in the midst of grandeur.

Gothic architecture is often found disgusting at present, from a disproportion or inconsistency, which, perhaps, originally pleased. A long and slender pillar sometimes apparently supports a weight which seems too great for it to bear. This want of symmetry renders an object highly deformed, which probably, by the appearance of extraordinary skill, delighted our ancestors. The pointed arch, which, because we have always seen it used in buildings venerable for age and sanctity, we have learned to think peculiarly solemn, is certainly in itself unpleasing and improper. The awkward angle, in the vertex, stops the rapid course of the eye, which loves to pursue the line of a circle or semicircle without obstruction. Nor let the satisfaction which is sometimes experienced from a view of it be thought an unanswerable objection to the general justness of this remark; for pleasing ideas, associated with objects unpleasing, will often communicate their agreeable tinge by approximation, and render even deformity no longer ungraceful. A view of the Gothic arch, in the antique pile raised by our progenitors, calls to remembrance the generations that have preceded us, renews the idea of some historical fact or celebrated personage, or suggests reflections on the piety, the zeal, the comparative ingenuity of our forefathers; and, on the whole, raises thoughts pleasingly awful on the sanctity of the *time-honoured*

edifice. All or any of these arbitrary associations will give an agreeable air to an object which might otherwise be contemplated with indifference or disgust.

The painted window, a striking ornament of our ancient edifices, exhibits a specimen by which we may form a judgement of the general turn of that taste which dictated every other decoration. Glaring colours, rendered still more glaring by transparency, seem to have constituted, in the idea of those who lived a century or two ago, the perfection of beauty. Accordingly, they viewed, with a pleasure uncontrolled by the chaste notions of modern elegance, the gaudy shrine, the glittering altar, the painted monument, and the emblazoned ceiling. Exactness of representation, and a faithful adherence to nature and propriety, were, indeed, wanting; but their place was amply supplied, in the ideas of the dark ages, by the glare of dazzling splendour. Perhaps it may be justly questioned whether the genuine graces of unadorned nature were at all pleasing to eyes accustomed to admire all that was laborious and artificial. The Medicean Venus would probably have had few charms till dressed like the lady of Loretto. The meretricious staining of the glass was commonly preferred to the chaste colouring of the canvass. Such, indeed, is the general preference where refinement is unknown; and there is no doubt but that an Indian would set a higher value on the Dutch toy that glitters, and awkwardly imitates the human shape, than on the statue of a Phidias, or on the painting of an Apelles. No wonder that our ancestors, at a period when they neither studied nature nor the ancients, displayed in the works of art the characteristic grossness of barbarism. Finery strikes immediately on the perceptive faculties; and a very considerable degree of ci-

vilisation must have taken place before the first strong decision of the senses can be superseded by the dictates of a critical delicacy.

The parts of a building which add to its strength, ought, whenever it is practicable, to contribute to its beauty. The vast buttresses of the Gothic architecture, supposing that they were necessary to support, which however they were not always, are seldom thought at present to conduce to ornament: but that they were sometimes intended to adorn, we may conclude from their being applied where, as supports, they are superfluous. And indeed, considered in this light, they are perfectly consistent with that general taste which seems to have delighted in supernumerary appendages, provided they conveyed the idea of great labour or difficulty. In the castle, and the fortified wall, they are, indeed, always admitted with good effect, because they add to the appearance of security as well as to real strength; but, in edifices consecrated to religion and the arts of peace, they occasion that disgust to true taste which results from the misapplication of supports and embellishments. Nor are they of themselves in the least beautiful. They want the rotundity of the column, and the uprightness of the pilaster, and abound with unpleasing angles.

The internal supports are often no less heavy and inelegant. Even where there appears a great resemblance to Grecian architecture, we find no vestiges of Grecian grace. The pillars are preposterously thick, and want the due height to render them pleasing to the eye. The bases, the shafts and the capitals, are joined together without symmetry, and seem not to have been considered by the artists as forming one whole, which, when proportionate, constitutes an object that never yet failed to please. Most of the artists, it is probable, knew not, in an

unenlightened age, the difference between the orders; and by blending them capriciously together, or by omitting some of their essential parts, formed, indeed, a column not quite unlike the Grecian, but too much disguised and deformed to be recognised among the orders of antiquity. The ornaments of the capitals are whimsical and ugly. The architrave, the frieze, and the cornice, are preserved in a mutilated, fantastic, and irregular form. Under these disadvantages, what little there is of the Grecian architecture yields in beauty to the Gothic, when the Gothic appears in its best style, genuine and unmixed. The mixture of the two styles in the same building, which is not uncommon, never has a good effect; since the Gothic spoils the uniformity of the Grecian, and the Grecian renders the Gothic more conspicuously inelegant by the contrast of its own beauty.

The darkness remarkable in religious buildings of this style has been admired as an excellence. It is said to throw the mind into that serious temper which is peculiarly adapted to the indulgence of devotion. Such an effect it may perhaps produce, in a great degree, on minds subject to superstition and fanaticism, or strongly influenced by a warm imagination; yet, why light, one of the most glorious works of creation, should cool the ardour of religion in the rational and dispassionate professor of it, no good reason can be assigned. The imaginations of all men are, however, affected by very trivial causes; and he knows little of human nature, who knows not the power of the imagination over the strongest understanding. But it is the business of philosophy to assert the empire of reason over fancy. A religious dimness may, perhaps, be deemed necessary by the bigoted inhabitants of the convent and the cloister, whose minds, it is to be feared, are often as

dark as their habitations: but light is cheerful, and cheerfulness is the disposition of innocence. If guilt is to be taught to feel contrition by the gloominess of the temple, it is to be presumed that the pious sorrow will be as transient as the emotion which caused it, and which, like other productions of the fancy, must be of short continuance. That our predecessors had no such end in view we may conclude, because the small contracted window is not appropriated to the church, but is often observed in the Gothic hall, palace, and private mansion. We may fairly infer, that the fashion took its rise from a defect in taste and judgement, not from a conviction of its peculiar propriety in religious houses; or, perhaps, the aperture was made small because glass was scarce in the early ages, and a large opening admitted the inclemency of the weather: but whatever was the cause, one is almost tempted to say, that it was a proof of uncommon narrowness of mind, to be sparing of that light which the Author of nature appears to have bestowed with a liberality almost unbounded, like his power.

But, in truth, while we censure the contracted taste, we must applaud the enlarged benevolence and unaffected piety of our forefathers. The numerous buildings which they consecrated to learning, however uncouth their appearance, have afforded retreats and opportunities of improvement to men who have been at once the ornaments of our nation and of mankind. Nor were the alms-house, and the hospital, less capable of administering comfort and relief to the needy and infirm, because built with little grace or symmetry: and the pious heart has poured forth its animated devotion at the rude Gothic shrine with a fervour not to be surpassed in the Grecian temple. The taste of our ancestors is, indeed, no longer a pattern for our own; but their

beneficent virtues will for ever continue proper objects of imitation.

The revival of ancient literature was soon followed by the revival of true taste. The latter was a natural consequence of the former. By an acquaintance with books the mind was opened, the views enlarged, and curiosity excited. Travelling into foreign countries, for the purposes of improvement, as well as of war and commerce, became a general practice, and was facilitated by the liberal spirit of inquiry which began universally to prevail. Our artists no sooner saw the Grecian and Roman remains of architecture, than they caught the idea of beauty, which they realised at their return. The new style of building, as the ancient, at its revival after lying dormant many ages, might be called, was immediately compared with that which then prevailed, and was preferred to it with intuitive discernment. It wanted only to be seen, to be admired and adopted.

And, indeed, its beauties are of so peculiar a kind, as to strike and please even the uncultivated mind. Like the fabric of the universe, it derives much of its grandeur from its simplicity. Its ornaments are chaste, elegant, captivating, and never superfluous. They are purposely contrived to wear the appearance of utility, and often really contribute to support as well as to adorn. Many of the most essential parts are, from their shape and proportion, as beautiful as those specifically termed ornamental. The column of each order, with all its appendages, and the semicircular or elliptical arch without a pointed vertex, seem to have something inherent in the form of them capable of giving pleasure to the mind, previously to the direction of rules and the disquisitions of criticism.

The passion for novelty and singularity is, how-

ever, often found to prefer the new and uncommon, even to allowed and established excellence; and for the gratification of this inborn avidity of human nature, absurdities long exploded and relinquished are often revived, and fanciful and monstrous innovations introduced. It is not therefore surprising, however culpable, that, in opposition to the general taste of mankind, many still admire and labour to restore the Gothic architecture; or that, tired of Grecian beauty, they endeavour to import into northern climates a style which they call oriental, but which is often mixed and modified with their own grotesque or puerile inventions. Ingenuity of design, skill in execution, and rarity of appearance, may cause even buildings of this fantastic form to excite a transient pleasure among the curious or the uninformed; but it is to be hoped that the general depravity of taste which can render them objects of general approbation will not soon take place. What were this but a preference of darkness to light, of deformity to beauty, of barbarism to refinement?

Of a revolution so fatal to the fine arts, there is, indeed, little danger. The standard of taste, that great desideratum in many of the works of human ingenuity, seems to be discovered and established in architecture. The caprice of a few individuals cannot alter it. Nor is it likely to be lost, till the same darkness which once overspread ancient Greece and Rome shall involve all modern Europe; an event too improbable to be apprehended, but by the visionary.

To please the eye has, in later times, become a collateral object in the building designed for private habitation, as it ever was in erecting the palace, the senate-house, and the temple: and though the modern methods of multiplying the works of original artists by substituting stucco for stone, by casting

in moulds the ornaments which were wont to be wrought by the chisel, and by using gilding for real gold, have rendered the Grecian and the florid style common in buildings intended for mean purposes; yet, however misplaced and prostituted, the Grecian manner will ever retain intrinsic beauty, and ought not to be less esteemed when it is displayed in its proper place by the ingenious architect.

With many such, and their judicious admirers, this nation is and has been honoured. It were easy to name those who would adorn the schools of Greece, and of ancient and modern Italy; but it is totally unnecessary. Their sagacious fellow-citizens have marked their merit; and their own works will be a monument of their fame to late posterity.

By the efforts of these artists, conducted according to the most graceful taste, the face of our country is daily acquiring new beauty. Grace without use and solidity is, indeed, of little permanent value; but when united with these, it commands, by deserving, universal applause and esteem. While in the present age we behold numerous and beautiful edifices arising on all sides, devoted to the purposes of religion, of benevolence, of learning, and of liberal enjoyment, we may justly congratulate our own nation, that the happy art is discovered and practised of combining elegance with convenience, and rendering ornament conducive to accommodation, and accommodation to ornament.

NO. LXXX.—A SHORT SYSTEM OF VIRTUE AND HAPPINESS.

I WILL suppose a virtuous young man forming in his mind the principles of his future conduct, and

uttering the result of his reflections in the following soliloquy:—

"At the age when I am approaching to maturity of reason, I perceive myself placed in a world abounding with external objects; and I also perceive within me faculties and passions formed to be powerfully excited and affected by them. I am naturally tempted to interrogate myself, What am I? whence came I? and whither am I going?

"With a view to satisfy my own inquiries, I consider others who appear to be just like myself; I listen to the instruction of those who have obtained a reputation for wisdom; and I examine, with serious attention, the volumes in which are written the words of the wise.

"The result of the whole inquiry is a sincere conviction that I am placed here to perform many duties; that I originate from a supreme Creator; and that I am going on in the journey of life, to accomplish some of his gracious purposes at the close of it, as well as in its progress.

"I divide my duty into three parts, according to the suggestions of my own reason and the instruction of books. They consist of the obligations which I owe to myself, to others, and to Him in whose hands are both they and I, the great Lord of the universe.

"With respect to myself, as I consist of two parts, a body and a mind, my duty to myself again separates itself into two correspondent subdivisions. My body is a machine curiously organized, and easily deranged by excess and irregularity. When disturbed in its œconomy, it subjects me to pain, and disables me from all necessary and pleasant exertion. I owe it, therefore, to myself, to taste the cup, and partake the banquet, and gratify all my senses, no farther than those limits which are

obviously prescribed by reason and experience. I farther learn from the religion of my country, that my body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Viewed in this light, to pollute it with sensual sin, cannot but be blasphemy; to devote myself, then, to gluttony, drunkenness, and debauchery, is at once to deaden the growing energies of spiritual life, and to weaken and destroy the subordinate yet necessary parts of me, my animal and material fabric; it is to shorten life, and to disable me from performing the duties of life, while life continues.

"But I have a mind as well as a body, a mind capable of rising to high improvements by culture, and of sinking to a brutal stupidity by neglect. I will make use of all the advantages of education. I will devote my hours of leisure to reading and reflection. Elegant letters, as well as useful science, shall claim my attention; for all that tends to polish the mind, tends also to sweeten the temper, and to mitigate the remains of natural ferocity.

"My mind, as well as my body, is greatly concerned in avoiding intemperance. Eating to excess clouds its brightness, blunts its edge, and drags it down to all the grossness of a material substance. Intemperate drinking not only reduces it at the time of its immediate influence to a state of brutality, but gradually destroys its vigour. The sensual indulgences in general, when they are inordinate and excessive, debase, corrupt, and brutalize the rational soul. Their delights are transient, their pains severe, and of long duration.

"Instead, then, of running into the danger of temptation during the ardour of my youth, I will fly from the conflict in which my own passions are sure to fight against me, and will probably betray me to the enemy. I see, indeed, thousands pursuing pleasure, and professing to have found it in perfection

in the haunts of debauchery. But I see them but for a little while. Like the silly insect that flutters with delight around the taper, they soon receive some fatal injury in their minds, their persons, or their fortunes, and drop in irrecoverable ruin. I am too much inclined to vice, from the depravity of my nature, and the violence of my passions. I will not add fuel to the fire, nor increase the violence of that natural tempest within me, which of itself is sufficient to accomplish my destruction.

" But, at the same time, I will not be a cynic.—The world abounds with innocent enjoyments. The kind God of nature, it is evident, from their existence, and from the capacities I possess, intended that I should taste them. But moderation is essential to true pleasure. My own experience, and the experience of mankind from their origin, has declared that whenever pleasure exceeds the bounds of moderation, it is not only highly injurious, but soon becomes disgustful. In order to enjoy pleasure, I see the necessity of pursuing some business with attention. The vicissitude is necessary to excite an appetite and give a relish. Nay the very performance of creditable and useful business, with skill and success, is attended with a delightful satisfaction, which few of the most boasted pleasures are able to confer.

" While I take care of myself, of my health, of my improvement in morals and understanding, I will not harbour pride, or look down with superciliousness or ill-nature on those who live, as it were, at random, and who acknowledge no other guide of their conduct but the sudden impulse of a temporary inclination. With all my improvements and endeavours, I shall still feel imperfections enough to humble me. Candour and humility are some of the least fallible marks of sound sense and sincere

virtue. I shall have sufficient employment in correcting myself; nor shall I presume to censure others, unless my profession or relative situation renders it my duty.

"My duty to myself is, indeed, intimately connected with my duty to others. By preserving the faculties of my mind and body, and by improving them to the utmost, I am enabled to exert them with effect in the service of society.

"I am connected with others by the ties of consanguinity and friendship; and by the common bond of partaking in the same humanity. As a son, I shall be tender and dutiful; as a brother, zealously and uniformly kind; as a husband, faithful, tender, and affectionate; as a father, gentle and provident; as a man, benevolent to men in whatever circumstances, and however separated from me by country, religion, or government.

"But universal benevolence must not be an inactive principle. If it proceed not to real beneficence, from sentiment to actions, I fear it will have more in it of ostentation than of sincerity. I will, then, prove its sincerity by doing good, and removing evil of every kind, as far as my abilities, allow me, as my influence extends, and opportunities are offered.

"But before I pretend to generosity, I will be strictly just. Truth shall regulate my words, and equity my actions. If I am engaged in a profession, I will do the duties of it; if in merchandise, I will take no advantage of the ignorant, nor debase my character, nor wound my conscience, for the sake of lucre. In all my intercourse with society, I will recollect that heavenly precept, of doing to others as I wish they should to me, and will endeavour to obey it. I may, I certainly shall, offend from the violence of my passions, the weakness of my judge-

ment, the perverseness of my will, and from mistake and misapprehension. But while I keep the evangelical rule in view, and sincerely labour to conform to it, I shall seldom commit such offences against others as will be either permanently or deeply injurious.

"With respect to my duty to my Creator, I derive an argument in favour of religion from the feelings of my own bosom, superior to the most elaborate subtilties of human ingenuity. In the hour of distress, my heart as naturally flies for succour to the Deity, as, when hungry and thirsty, I seek food and water, or, when weary, repose. In religion I look for comfort, and in religion I always find it. Devotion supplies me with a pure and exalted pleasure. It elevates my soul, and teaches me to look down with a proper contempt upon many objects which are eagerly sought, but which end in misery. In this respect, and in many others, it effects, in the best and most compendious method, what has been in vain pretended to by proud philosophy.

"And in selecting a mode or peculiar system of religion, I shall consider what that was in which my father lived and died. I find it to have been the religion of Christ. I examine it with reverence. I encounter many difficulties; but, at the same time, I feel within me an internal evidence, which, uniting its force with the external, forbids me to disbelieve. When involuntary doubts arise, I immediately silence their importunity by recollecting the weakness of my judgement, and the vain presumption of hastily deciding on the most important of all subjects, against such powerful evidence, and against the major part of the best and wisest men, in regions of the earth the most illuminated.

"I will learn humility of the humble Jesus, and gratefully accept the beneficial doctrines and glo-

rious offers which his benign religion reaches out to all who sincerely seek him by prayer and penitence.

"In vain shall the conceited philosophers, whom fashion and ignorance admire, attempt to weaken my belief, or undermine the principles of my morality. Without their aid, I can be sufficiently wicked, and sufficiently miserable. Human life abounds with evil. I will seek balsams for the wounds of the heart in the sweets of innocence, and in the consolations of religion. Virtue, I am convinced, is the noblest ornament of humanity, and the source of the sublimest and the sweetest pleasure; and piety leads to that peace, which the world, and all that it possesses, cannot bestow. Let others enjoy the pride and pleasure of being called philosophers, deists, sceptics; be mine the real, unostentatious qualities of the honest, humble, and charitable Christian. When the gaudy glories of fashion and of vain philosophy shall have withered like a short-lived flower, sincere piety and moral honesty shall flourish as the cedar of Lebanon.

"But I repress my triumphs. After all my improvements, and all my desires of perfection, I shall still be greatly defective. Therefore, to whatever degree of excellence I advance, let me never forget to show to others that indulgence, which my infirmities, my errors, and my voluntary misconduct, will require both from them and from mine and their Almighty and most Merciful Father."

NO. LXXXI.—ON THE PECULIAR PROPRIETY OF EXCITING PERSONAL MERIT AND MANLY VIRTUE IN A TIME OF PUBLIC DISTRESS AND DIFFICULTY.

THE dignity and rational happiness of human nature are always proportionate to its real improvements. Moral instruction can never be superfluous or unseasonable; for human virtue, like the stone of Sisyphus, has a continual tendency to roll down the hill, and requires to be forced up again by the never-ceasing efforts of succeeding moralists and divines.

But with respect to the influence of virtue on the prosperity of a state, it is certain, that emergencies arise, when extraordinary degrees of it, throughout the whole body of the people, are peculiarly necessary. National adversity, like adversity in private life, prohibits the indulgence of a supine indolence, and calls for the most energetic activity. Virtues which have lain dormant, like arms in the arsenal, during the soft season of peace and plenty, must be brought forth to be, if I may so express it, brightened and sharpened in the day of danger and distress. And, perhaps, no time can demand them more loudly than when the nation is engaged in war with formidable powers, and weakened by internal corruption.

The strength of empire consists in the spirit of its members, and not altogether in its possessions and pecuniary resources. But how is that spirit to be roused or properly directed? The understanding must be enlightened, the ideas elevated, the heart enlarged. Ignorance, avarice, and luxury, render men indifferent under what form of government, or in what state of society, they live. They superin-

duce a weakness and a meanness, which, for the sake of sensual gratification or sordid interest, rejoice in submitting to the sceptre of tyranny.

Liberty, without which we might almost venture to repine at our existence as an useless and a baneful gift of God, cannot be understood or valued, and consequently will not be duly supported, without a competent share of improvement, moral and intellectual. The vain, the vicious, and the mercenary, seldom extend their cares beyond themselves; and the poor plebeian, though he may vociferate the word Liberty, knows not how to give it an effectual support. What avails empty breath when opposed to the bayonet or the bullet of a despotical invader? Nothing but a steady, firm, systematic, and unshaken opposition to the encroachments of those to whom fortune has given power and nature an inclination to abuse it, can secure those blessings to our children, for which a Hampden and a Sydney bled. The glorious liberties of an Englishman, such as the right of trial by juries, a participation of the legislature, the freedom of the press, and the privilege of speaking, acting, and thinking, without arbitrary control, are such as render England, in comparison with some neighbouring nations, a terrestrial paradise; but yet they are advantages too remote to affect the sensual and self-interested, and too complicated to be completely understood, or rationally valued, by a gross and uncultivated understanding.

I venture, then, to assert, that the writer who effectually recommends pure morals, manly virtues, and the culture of the intellectual powers, by a liberal and virtuous education, not only serves the cause of learning, morality, and religion, but effects political good of a species the most permanent and substantial. His labours tend to advance the members of his society to all the perfection of which hu-

manity is susceptible. He enlightens their understandings, that they may see the great and solid objects of public good; and he emboldens their hearts to pursue it like men—like men, not such as grovel on the earth in modern Greece and modern Italy, in Asia, Africa, South America; but such as opposed a Xerxes in the straits of Thermopylæ, waged war with a Philip, or put an end to the ambition of a Tarquin and a Cæsar.

The generous love of liberty which warmed the bosoms of a Hampden and a Sydney, was not the mean offspring of envy and malice, nor of a proud and peevish opposition to the ruling powers, whatever they might be; but it was acquired in the schools of rigid discipline and sublime philosophy. It was accompanied with singular gravity of manners, and dignity of sentiment. Now, let us suppose a nation, in which those who have most influence in its government are become, through a general and fashionable depravity, addicted to sordid interest, to luxury, to vanity, to servility for the sake of emolument; can any thing like the virtue of Leonidas or Brutus subsist in such men? Will they, in an extremity, be ready to sacrifice for the public their estates, their places, their pensions, their expectations, which furnish them with their chief good,—selfish gratifications, the indulgence of voluptuousness or pride?—Will they not rather rejoice to be dependent on a court, which is able to gratify their vanity, supply their pleasures, and reward their meanest submission?

From the most impartial review of history, and from considerations on the nature of man, I am convinced, that good morals and intellectual improvement are essentially necessary to the existence of civil liberty and to the continuance of national prosperity. At a time, then, when both liberty and

prosperity are endangered, exhortations to virtue, and every excellence at which an ingenuous nature can aspire, are peculiarly seasonable. They brace the nerves and sinews of the body politic, and enable it to lift its arm in self-defence with irresistible vigour. They add strength to the foundation of empire, so that the assaults of united nations shall not shake the noble fabric.

In this view, and under these circumstances, I cannot help thinking that even my lucubrations may be in some measure useful to my countrymen. It has been my invariable object to enlighten their understandings, to exalt and improve their nature, to ascertain and vindicate their rights as men and as members of a society, and to teach them to pay no implicit submission but to truth, reason, law, their conscience, and their God.

NO. LXXXII.—ON THE MEANS OF READING WITH THE MOST ADVANTAGE.

It is probable that many students impair their health in a continual course of reading and literary labour, without an adequate return of pleasure or improvement. They read, indeed, because they consider it as a duty, or because they are endeavouring to accomplish themselves for the practice of a profession; but they are ready to confess that the whole tenour of their studies is one continued toil, and that the advantage they derive from them is by no means a recompence for exhausted spirits and habitual melancholy.

With a view to relieve students of this description, who are usually virtuous and laudable characters, I will endeavour to suggest a few hints, which may

possibly contribute to render their reading more agreeable and advantageous. But I wish to premise, that in what I now say, and in whatever I have said, in the style of direction and advice, I mean only to offer, not to obtrude; to submit, and not to dictate.

In order to receive the proper advantage from reading, it must be rendered a pleasing employment. Human nature is so constituted, that no practice will be continued long and regularly which is not attended with some degree of pleasure. We enter upon a study which is irksome and disgustful with reluctance; we attend to it superficially, and we relinquish it without reflecting upon it in a degree sufficient for the purpose of improvement. Instead of thinking of it uniformly and steadily, we drive it from our minds as the cause of uneasiness. But the heart and affections, the imagination and the memory, co-operate with the understanding in deriving all possible advantage from the study which we love.

The first and most important object is, therefore, to form a strong attachment to those parts of science, or to those books, which our judgement or situation directs us to study. There are various methods conducive to this end; but perhaps none are more effectual than that of conversing with men of sense and genius on the books and the subjects which we purpose to examine. There is a warmth and spirit in conversation which renders topics, otherwise cold and lifeless, both interesting and animated. When the company is departed, and the conversation at an end, we are naturally inclined to see what has been said in books on the subjects discussed; and the light let in by the preceding conversation is an excellent introduction and guide to our subsequent inquiries in solitude.

As soon as we have obtained, by reading, a competent knowledge of a book or particular subject, it will contribute greatly to animate us in proceeding still farther, if we talk of it either with our equals or inferiors in attainments, or with the learned and experienced. In such conversation we venture to advance an opinion; our self-love renders us solicitous to maintain it. We seek the aid of a book as an auxiliary; we therefore read it with eager attention; and I believe it will be difficult to avoid loving that which we attend to frequently and with eagerness; so that in this manner an attachment to books and literary employments is gradually formed; and what began in labour or necessity becomes choice, and constitutes, as it is found to do in a thousand instances, a most delightful pleasure.

Indeed, if we can once fix our attention very closely on a good book, nothing more will be necessary to make us love it. As in nature, when two substances approach each other very nearly, the attraction of cohesion fastens them together; so when the mind attaches itself closely to any subject whatever, it becomes, as it were, united to it, and gravitates towards it with a spontaneous velocity. There is, indeed, no study so dry, but by fixing our attention upon it, we may at last find it capable of affording great delight. Metaphysics and mathematics, even in their abstrusest parts, are known to give the attentive student a very exalted satisfaction. Those parts, then, of human learning, which in their nature are more entertaining, which address the imagination as well as the intellect, cannot fail of being beloved in a high degree, when the mind is closely and habitually applied to them.

In order to acquire the power and habit of fixing the attention, it will at first be necessary to summon

a very considerable degree of resolution. In beginning the study of a new language, or any book or science which presents ideas totally strange, the mind cannot but feel some degree of disgust or reluctance. But let the student persevere, and in a very short time the disgust or reluctance will vanish, and he will be rewarded with high entertainment. Till this takes place, let him make it an inviolable rule, however disagreeable, to read a certain quantity, or for a certain time, and he will infallibly find, that what he entered upon as a task he will continue as a pleasure.

There are many students who spend their days in extracting passages from authors, and fairly transcribing them in their common-place book; a mode of study truly miserable, which seldom repays the student either with profit or delight, which wastes his time, and wears out his eyes and his constitution. I most seriously advise all those who have been led to think that the exercise of the hand can impress ideas on the brain, who interrupt their attention by copying, who torture themselves in abridging, and who think that by filling their portfolios they shall enrich their understandings, to stop, while they have eyes to see or fingers to write. They have totally mistaken the road to learning; and if they proceed in the way too long a time, they may suffer such injuries in it as shall disable them from returning, or seeking a better. After many years spent in this wretched labour, it is no wonder that they close their books, and make the old complaint of vanity and vexation. Nothing really serves us in reading but what the mind makes its own by reflection and memory. That which is transcribed, and then laid aside, is not in the least more appropriated than when it stood in the printed page. It is an error, if any suppose, that, by the

act of marking the words on paper with a pen, the ideas are more clearly marked on the brain than by an attentive and repeated perusal.

The best method of extracting and epitomizing is to express the author's ideas, after shutting his book, in our own words. In this exercise the memory is exerted, and the style improved. We make what we write our own; we think, we are active, and we do not condemn ourselves to an employment merely manual and mechanical. But after all, whatever a few may say, write, or think to the contrary, it is certain that the greatest scholars of past times were content with reading, without making either extracts or epitomes. They were satisfied with what remained in their minds after a diligent perusal, and when they wrote, they wrote their own. Reading is, indeed, most justly called the food of the mind. Like food, it must be digested and assimilated; it must show its nutritive power by promoting growth and strength, and by enabling the mind to bring forth sound and vigorous productions. It must be converted *in succum et sanguinem*, into juice and blood, and not make its appearance again in the form in which it was originally imbibed. It is indeed true, and the instance may be brought in opposition to my doctrine, that Demosthenes transcribed Thucydides eight times with his own hand; but it should be remembered, that Demosthenes flourished long before printing was discovered, and that he was induced to transcribe Thucydides not only for the sake of improvement, but also for the sake of multiplying copies of a favourite author. Besides, he probably transcribed a good deal from memory; an exercise which certainly might assist to improve him in habits of composition.

A due degree of variety will contribute greatly to

render reading agreeable. For, though it is true that not more than one or two books should be read at once, yet when they are finished, it will be proper, if any weariness is felt, to take up an author who writes in a different style, or on a different subject; to change from poetry to prose, and from prose to poetry; to intermix the moderns with the ancients; alternately to lay down the book, and to take up the pen; and sometimes to lay them both down, and enter with alacrity into agreeable company and public diversions. The mind after a little cessation, returns to books with all the voracious eagerness of a literary hunger. But the intermissions must not be long, nor frequent enough to form a habit of idleness or dissipation.

He who would read with pleasure (and I repeat, that all who read with real profit must read with pleasure), will attend to the times of the day and the seasons of the year. The morning has been universally approved as the best time for study: the afternoon may be most advantageously spent in improving conversation. Those faculties which before dinner are capable of engaging in the acutest and sublimest disquisitions, are found, by general experience, to be comparatively dull and stupid after it. "I know not how it is," said a celebrated writer, "but all my philosophy, in which I was so warmly engaged in the morning, appears to me like nonsense as soon as I have dined."

Very hot weather is particularly unfavourable to reading. The months of July, August, and September, are by no means the seasons in which the fruits of the mind arrive at maturity. A rigid philosopher will perhaps maintain, that the mental faculties are not to be affected by the vicissitudes of cold and heat; but who will listen to philosophy who is already convinced by actual experience? It

is indeed remarkable, that these months are selected for vacation in the houses of legislature, in the courts of law, and in the seats of learning. In cold and inclement weather, when we are driven to the fire-side for comfort, we find that delight in our books which, in the vernal and autumnal season, we seek in the sunshine, and in the sweets of rural scenery. In the winter we no longer roam abroad, but collect our scattered ideas, and find, in the exercise of our faculties, that delight which is the consequence and reward of exerting, in a proper method, the natural energies of the divine particle which breathes within us.

But at all hours, and in all seasons, if we can restrain the licentious rovings of the fancy, soothe the passions of the heart, and command our attention so as to concentre it on the subject we examine, we shall be sure to find it amply rewarded. Attend closely, and close attention to any worthy subject will always produce solid satisfaction, pleasure as well as profit.

NO. LXXXIII.—ON THE PROPRIETY OF ADORNING LIFE, AND SERVING SOCIETY, BY LAUDABLE EXERTION.

In an age of opulence and luxury, when the native powers of the mind are weakened by vice, and general habits of indolence are superinduced by general indulgence, the moralist can seldom expect to see examples of that unwearied perseverance, of that noble and disinterested exertion, which has sometimes appeared in the world, and has been called heroic virtue. Indeed, it must be allowed, that in the early periods of society there is greater

occasion, as well as greater scope, for this exalted species of public spirit, than when all its real wants are supplied, and all its securities established, and the minds of men are enervated by luxury.

Under these disadvantages there is, indeed, little opportunity for that uncommon heroism which leads an individual to desert his sphere, and to act in contradiction to the maxims of personal interest and safety, with a view to reform the manners, or to promote the honour and advantage of the community. Patriotism, as it was understood and practised by a Brutus, a Curtius, a Scævola, or a Socrates, appears in modern times so eccentric a virtue, and abhorrent from the dictates of common sense, that he who should imitate it would draw upon himself the ridicule of mankind, and incur the danger of being stigmatized as a madman. Moral and political heroism would now appear in scarcely a less ludicrous light than the extravagancies of knight-errantry.

But to do good in an effectual and extensive manner within the limits of professional influence, and by performing the business of a station, whatever it may be, not only with regular fidelity, but with warm and active diligence, is in the power, as it is the duty, of every individual who possesses the use of his faculties in a state of independence. It is surely an unsatisfactory idea to live and die without pursuing any other purpose than the low one of sensual gratification. A thousand pleasures and advantages we have received from the disinterested efforts of those who have gone before us; and it is incumbent on every generation to do something not only for the benefit of contemporaries, but of those also who are to follow.

To be born, as Horace says, merely to consume the fruits of the earth; to live, as Juvenal observes

of some of his countrymen, with no other purpose than to gratify the palate, though they may in reality be the sole ends of many, are yet too inglorious and disgraceful to be avowed by the basest and meanest of mankind.

There is, however, little doubt but that many whose lives have glided away in an useless tenour would have been glad of opportunities, if they could have discovered them, for heroic exertion. It is certainly true, that to qualify for great and extraordinary, whether political, military, literary, or patriotic efforts, peculiar preparations, accomplishments, occasions, and fortuitous contingencies, are necessary. Civil wisdom without civil employment, valour without an enemy, learning without opportunities for its display, the love of our country without power, must terminate in abortive wishes, in designs merely chimerical. They who project great schemes, and perform great exploits, must of necessity be few. But the exertions which CHRISTIAN CHARITY points out are extended to a great compass, are infinitely varied in kind and degree, and consequently adapted, in some mode or other, to the ability of every individual.

To the distinguished honour of our times and of our country, it must be asserted, that there is no species of distress admitting alleviation which is not relieved; no charitable institution which is not encouraged with an emulative ardour of liberality. No sooner is a proper object of beneficence presented to the public view, than subscriptions are raised by all ranks, who crowd with impatience to the contribution. Not only the infirmities of age and sickness are soothed by the best concerted establishments, and the loss sustained by the calamities of a conflagration repaired, but our enemies, when reduced to a state of captivity, are furnished

with every comfort which their condition can admit, and all the malignity of party-hatred melts into kindness under the operation of charity. From the accumulated efforts of a community of philanthropists, such as our nation may be called, a sum of good is produced, far greater than any recorded of the heroes of antiquity, from Bacchus down to Cæsar.

It has been said, that the ages of extraordinary bounty are passed. No colleges are founded in the present times it is true; yet not because there is no public spirit remaining, but because there is already a sufficient number raised by the pious hands of our forefathers to answer all the purposes of an academical institution. When a want is supplied, it is not parsimony, but prudence, which withholds additional munificence. The infirmaries diffused over every part of the kingdom are most honourable testimonies of that virtue which is to cover a multitude of sins. And there is one instance of beneficence, uncommon both in its degree and circumstances, which, though done without a view to human praise, must not lose even the subordinate reward of human virtue. He who lately devoted, during his life, a noble fortune to the relief of the blind, will be placed higher in the esteem of posterity than the numerous train of posthumous benefactors who gave what they could no longer retain, and sometimes from motives represented by the censorious as little laudable. While angels of mercy record the names of Hetherington, Howard, and Hanway, in the book of life, let men inscribe them, after erasing the whole catalogue of conquerors, in the rolls of fame.

The motive of praise, though by no means the best, is a generous and a powerful motive of all commendable conduct. He would do an injury to mankind who should stifle the love of fame. It has

burnt with strong and steady heat in the bosoms of the most ingenuous. It has inspired enthusiasm in the cause of all that is good and great. Where patience must have failed, and perseverance been wearied, it has urged through troubles deemed intolerable, and stimulated through difficulties dreaded as insurmountable. Pain, penury, danger, and death, have been incurred with alacrity in the service of mankind, with the expectation of no other recompence than an honourable distinction. And let not the frigidity of philosophical rigour damp this noble ardour, which excites delightful sensations in the heart that harbours it, and gives rise to all that is sublime in life and in the arts. When we are so far refined and subdued as to act merely from the slow suggestions of the reasoning faculty, we shall indeed seldom be involved in error; but we shall as seldom achieve any glorious enterprise, or snatch a virtue beyond the reach of prudence.

The spirit of adventure in literary undertakings, as well as in politics and commerce, must not be discouraged. If it produces that which is worth little notice, neglect is easy. There is a great probability, however, that it will often exhibit something conducive to pleasure and improvement. But when every new attempt is checked by severity, or neglected without examination, learning stagnates, and the mind is depressed, till its productions so far degenerate as to justify disregard. Taste and literature are never long stationary. When they cease to advance, they become retrograde.

Every liberal attempt to give a liberal entertainment is entitled to a kind excuse, though its execution should not have a claim to praise. For the sake of encouraging subsequent endeavours, lenity should be displayed where there is no appearance of incorrigible stupidity, of assuming ignorance, and

of empty self-conceit. Severity chills the opening powers, as the frost nips the bud that would else have been a blossom. It is blameable moroseness to censure those who sincerely mean to please, and fail only from causes not in their own disposal.

The praise, however, of well-meaning has usually been allowed with a facility of concession which leads to suspect that it was thought of little value. It has also been received with apparent mortification. This surely is the result of a perverted judgement; for intention is in the power of every man, though none can command ability.

NO. LXXXIV.—ON PHILOSOPHICAL CRITICISM, AND ON THE LITTLE ASSISTANCE IT GIVES TO GENIUS.

Aristotle was the first of those writers who endeavoured to render taste subject to philosophy. His Poetics, mutilated and imperfect as they have come down to us, yet contain many sentences pregnant with matter, and which lead the mind into the most curious theory. Yet it is certain, that they never yet formed a single poet, nor assisted him in any other respect than in the mechanical contrivance of a plan; a defect in which is easily forgiven, when it is supplied by the native charms of real genius. Of this our Shakespeare is a proof, who, with all his ignorance of critical refinement, wrote in such a manner as not only to be preferred by those who idolize him through prejudice, but by the most impartial readers, to Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.

Though the old scholastic metaphysics were scarcely ever more exploded than in the present

times, yet there is a taste for metaphysical criticism particularly prevalent among our thoughtful neighbours in North Britain. The author of the Elements of Criticism has penetrated deeply to discern the cause of those emotions which literary compositions are found to produce. He has displayed great taste, great elegance, and a subtilty of inquiry which must have resulted from laborious attention, and from a singular share of natural sagacity. But I believe no reader ever found himself better able to compose, after having perused his volumes, than before. Nor is it said that their author, with all his theoretical knowledge of poetry, was himself a poet or an orator. This is not advanced to detract from his merit; for it is true of Aristotle, and of all those writers who, with a genius for logic and metaphysics, have entered on the provinces of taste and criticism. Dr. Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric is a book of uncommon merit; it is read with great pleasure and improvement; yet it will be readily owned that it tends little to form the real orator. The author of the Origin and Progress of Language has displayed, as Harris says, "many judicious and curious remarks on style, composition, language, particularly the English; observations of the last consequence to those who wish either to write or judge with accuracy and elegance." This is partly true; and yet many have written, and many will write, with accuracy and elegance, without even hearing of this ingenious treatise.

Most of the books which the world has agreed to admire were composed previously to the appearance of systematical and abstruse theories of criticism, or by authors who, it is well known, paid them no attention. Homer, who is still the best heathen author in the world, had neither archetype nor in-

structor. Had his mind been called off from the book of nature to such speculations as the Stagyrite afterwards fabricated from his noble inventions, there is great reason to believe that the Iliad and Odyssey had long ago gone whither all the coldly correct productions are daily hastening. Theocritus would probably have written with much less ease and simplicity, had he read all that critical ingenuity has advanced on pastoral poetry. The Orations of Demosthenes, however elaborate, were not formed on the models of professed rhetoricians, but of orators engaged in active political life. No Bossu had written when Virgil produced his magnificent work. No treatises on the sublime and beautiful had appeared when Milton poured his majestic song. Nature, glowing nature, suggested the exquisitely fine language and ideas as they flowed, and left laborious criticism to weary herself in forming rules and systems from the unstudied efforts of her happier temerity.

It must not, however, be immediately concluded, that these books, which display great ingenuity, are useless, and the result of ill-employed time and talents. They constitute a most elegant species of philosophy. They lead to a knowledge of the human heart, and the operation of the passions. They require genius of a peculiar kind, the subtile and penetrating; and they please readers who are possessed of a corresponding taste. The point which I mean to evince is, that the lover of poetry, and of oratory, who intends to exercise himself in composition, will find himself mistaken in his plan of study if he reads such writers as a preparatory discipline. Original authors must at first engross his attention; and from these, if he is possessed of abilities, he will insensibly catch a portion of fire, with which he will invigorate his own compositions; and in conse-

quence of which he will be read with pleasure, though he should not have studied one metaphysical critic, from Aristotle to his modern imitators, Harris, Home, and Monboddo.

To learn in what this noble distinction denominated genius consists, has been the subject of much inquiry. Little success has hitherto attended it; for the mind, as it has been often said, like the eye, though it calls up all nature to its view, cannot procure a sight of itself. With great probability it has been supposed, that genius is an extraordinary power of attention; a capacity in the mind of attaching itself closely and strongly, at a glance, to every object that solicits its regard; of taking in the whole of it in all its distant relations, dependencies, modifications, origin, and consequences. But if we allow an extraordinary power of attention to be genius, which perhaps cannot be allowed, the question recurs, By what means this attention is caused and secured? Thus far the name is only changed, and the subject still involved in its original difficulty.

It is too obviously true to be controverted, that there is an essential difference in the organization of different men; not merely in the external form, but in the interior structure of the invisible springs which regulate all the animal tendencies and motions. It is highly probable, that a delicate system of nerves, or a firmer contexture of them, is better able to observe the external world with unerring accuracy, than a more callous or more relaxed assemblage of these instruments of sensation. This favourable predisposition of the organs, followed by peculiar opportunities for collecting ideas, and by inducements to impart them to the world, may perhaps constitute what we call literary genius.

There is, indeed, little doubt but that some kind

of genius, or, in other words, some peculiar ability to receive a certain train of ideas necessary to the practice of an art, or to the pursuit of a profession, is possessed by every individual not in a state of idiotism. Nature, a kind parent to all her children, has usually endowed them all with a power of exerting themselves in some way or other with skill and advantage. The misfortune has been, that the indications of nature are not always sufficiently manifest to the conductors of education. The destination is often necessarily fixed before the faculties have arrived at sufficient strength to point out their natural propensity.

Universal genius is indeed sparingly, perhaps never, bestowed. For the preservation of impartiality, where nature has allowed an excellence in any remarkable degree, she has often permitted a defect to counterbalance it. Yet, in the literary annals of almost every nation, we find many distinguished by intellectual endowments above the ordinary condition of humanity. It is a noble privilege to excel men in the very perfection by which they surpass the irrational animals, and is doubtless permitted by Providence, in a few individuals, for the happiness of human nature. Let it be considered, as an instance of the advantage which mankind derives from singular genius, what a train of light has been diffused far and wide on thousands and tens of thousands, for the space of near twenty hundred years, from the illumined understanding of the individual Cicero. Or, to take an example from our own polished age and country, let a conjecture be formed of the number of those who have been led to every thing good and great (KALOKAGATHIAN) by an Addison.

The world, however, has seldom been grateful to its benefactors. It has neglected, banished, poison-

ed, and crucified them. But there was an inward satisfaction in conscious rectitude, a generous spirit in heroic virtue, which bore them through every thing with comfort, and their merit increased and triumphed in adversity.

They who have been possessed of subordinate degrees of genius have, in latter times, been induced to affect a singularity of sentiment and practice, in order to draw upon themselves the eyes of mankind. In pursuit of this end, they have adopted vices and principles which their hearts and understandings must have condemned. Eccentricity has been the object of their wishes. Ruin and disgrace have been the usual consequences; and the admiration of others has at last been extinguished in compassion. Poor man! it has been often exclaimed, he was indeed clever; but he wanted conduct, and he unfortunately died in a gaol.

If moral could be combined with mental excellence; if the native vigour of genius could submit to be guided and restrained by the decisions of well-conducted art; then might be supplied, what none will venture to expect, the two grand desiderata in morals and literature,—a perfect man, and a perfect work. But before perfection can be reasonably expected in any thing which belongs to man, this mortal must put on immortality, and this corruptible incorruption.

NO. LXXXV.—ON THE IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD CHARACTER, CONSIDERED ONLY WITH RESPECT TO INTEREST.

As the minds of men are infinitely various, and as they are therefore influenced in the choice of a con-

duct by different inducements, the moralist must omit no motive, however subordinate in its nature, while it appears likely to lead some among mankind to a laudable or even a blameless behaviour. A regard to ease, to interest, and to success, in the usual pursuits of wealth and ambition, may induce many to pursue an honest and honourable conduct who would not have been influenced by purer motives; but who, after they have once perceived the intrinsic excellence and beauty of such a conduct, will probably persevere in it for its own sake, and upon higher considerations.

To those who are to make their own way either to wealth or honours, a good character is usually no less necessary than address and abilities. Though human nature is degenerate, and corrupts itself still more by its own inventions, yet it usually retains to the last an esteem for excellence. But even if we are arrived at such an extreme degree of depravity as to have lost our native reverence for virtue, yet a regard to our own interest and safety, which we seldom lose, will lead us to apply for aid, in all important transactions, to men whose integrity is unimpeached. When we choose an assistant or associate in a profession, a partner, or a servant, our first inquiry is concerning his character. When we have occasion for a counsellor or attorney, a physician or apothecary, whatever we may be ourselves, we always choose to trust our property and persons to men of the best character. When we fix on the tradesmen who are to supply us with necessaries, we are not determined by the outward sign of the lamb, or the wolf, or the fox, nor by a shop fitted up in the most elegant taste, but by the fairest reputation. Look into a daily newspaper, and you will see, from the highest to the lowest rank, how important the characters of the employed appear

to the employers. After the advertisement has enumerated the qualities required in the person wanted, there constantly follows, that none need apply who cannot bring an undeniable character. Offer yourself as a candidate for a seat in parliament, be promoted to honour and emolument, or in any respect attract the attention of mankind upon yourself, and if you are vulnerable in your character, you will be deeply wounded. This is a general testimony in favour of honesty, which no writings and no practices can possibly refute.

Young men, therefore, whose moral characters are yet unfixed, and who, consequently, may render them just such as they wish, ought to pay great attention to the first steps which they take on entrance into life. They are usually careless and inattentive to this object. They pursue their own plans with ardour, and neglect the opinions which others entertain of them. By some thoughtless action or expression, they suffer a mark to be impressed upon them, which scarcely any subsequent merit can entirely erase. Every man will find some persons, who, though they are not professed enemies, yet view him with an envious or a jealous eye, and who will gladly revive and aggravate any tale which malice has invented, or to which truth has given the slightest foundation.

Indeed, all men are so much inclined to flatter their own pride by detracting from the reputation of others, that, even if we were able to maintain an immaculate conduct, it would still be difficult to preserve an immaculate character. But yet it is wisdom not to furnish this detracting spirit with real subjects for the exercise of its activity. While calumny is supported only by imagination, or by malice, we may sometimes remove, by contradicting it; but wherever folly or vice have supplied facts,

we can seldom do more than aggravate the evil, by giving it an apparent attention. The malignity of some, among the various dispositions of which mankind are composed, is often highly gratified at the view of injured sensibility.

In this turbulent and confused scene, where our words and actions are often misunderstood, and oftener misrepresented, it is indeed difficult even for innocence and integrity to avoid reproach, abuse, contempt, and hatred. These not only hurt our interest, and impede our advancement in life, but sorely afflict the feelings of a tender and delicate mind. It is, then, the part of wisdom first to do every thing in our power to preserve an irreproachable character, and then to let our happiness depend chiefly on the approbation of our own consciences, and on the advancement of our interest in a world where liars shall not be believed, and where slanderers shall receive countenance from none but him who, in Greek, is called, by way of eminence, Diabolus, or the Calumniator.

NO. LXXXVI.—ON THE OSTENTATIOUS AFFECTATION OF THE CHARACTER OF A LEARNED LADY, WITHOUT SUFFICIENT LEARNING, AND WITHOUT JUDGEMENT.

THE most attractive beauty of the person results from the graces of the mind. Delicacy, sweetness, sense, and sensibility, shining in the eyes, will compensate an irregularity of features, and sooner excite love, in a feeling heart, than the best formed face, and the finest complexional hue without expression.

Nature must, indeed, have laid the foundation of

these amiable qualities in the disposition; but they are by no methods so effectually called forth and improved as by the cultivation of a taste for letters and the fine arts. In a vulgar intercourse with the world, we cannot avoid seeing and feeling the disagreeable passions, such as have an effect in distorting the countenance, and in giving to the eyes an envious, a proud, a disdainful, or an artful aspect; than which nothing is more repugnant to the power of personal allurement. Eyes that unfortunately have acquired any of these appearances, whatever beauties they may be surrounded with, possess a repellent influence, and operate like the basilisk. But, however wicked the world is, books are for the most part still virtuous. Human nature appears in them in its most pleasing colours. When properly chosen, they inspire generous and tender sentiments. She who is judiciously conversant with them in her youth, will find her countenance improving as her mind is informed, and her look ennobled as her heart is elevated. This must be a powerful motive for application among the ladies; and they may rest assured, that personal and mental beauty, though, when separate, their dominion is not absolute, are truly irresistible and despotic when combined.

An application to books, however, is often found not to produce any attractive effects; nor is it to be wondered at, when it is conducted in an injudicious and desultory manner. The advice of friends is at first necessary to point out the kind of books, and the times, the modes, and the degree of study. Superficial and ill-directed reading tends to inspire the most odious of all vanity, and to occasion a behaviour truly ridiculous.

Sempronia has studied all the magazines for these ten years past, and has now and then obtained the honour of contributing a little piece to some of her

admired miscellanies. This flattering distinction, as she thinks it, has greatly elevated her in her own opinion. She deems it sufficient to emancipate her from the usual decorum of external behaviour. She talks with an overbearing confidence, which, if she were not excused because she is a professed wit, would be intolerable rudeness. Her attention to the Muses has excluded the Graces from any share of her notice. If you call upon her in the morning, you find her with slipshod shoes, a slovenly dress, and fingers begrimed with ink. If you ask her in what she is exercising her genius, she informs you, she is writing a Pindaric Ode on Spring, and is looking in Byshe's Art of Poetry for a rhyme to trees. It must be sent immediately, she says, or it will not be inserted this month. She hopes, therefore, that she may be excused in declining company. Her visitor has reason to rejoice at the dismission, for the sight of her is not pleasing, and her inattention to common civilities is disgustful.

Corinna happened to fall upon some of the works of our modern sceptics. She could not understand them perfectly; but she discovered enough to be assured that scepticism was supposed to be a mark of superior sense, of a freedom from those narrow prejudices which enthral the vulgar. She cannot, therefore, talk on common affairs; but when she gets into company with enlightened people, she expatiates on the happiness of possessing a philosophical turn, and pities the poor narrow souls who go to church, and perform all their duties, as they call them, with mechanical regularity, just like their great-grandmothers. Voltaire, Rousseau, Bolingbroke, and Hume, are her oracles. She is dreaded by her own sex, and, indeed, voluntarily gives up their society. But the men she thinks more entertaining, more conversable, and less shackled with

prejudices. She imagines herself particularly attended to by them; and indeed there are some humourists who listen to her conversation, in order to lay up store for ridicule. All who are judges condemn and dislike her, for entering into studies which have a natural tendency to darken the understanding and to corrupt the heart, and which are peculiarly odious in those who were formed to increase the comforts of life, and not to cut them off, by diffusing the gloomy notions of the sceptic.

It was the misfortune of Fulvia to live next door to a circulating library. In every moment of listlessness the maid was despatched for a handful of novels, without regarding by whom they were written, or what they were in themselves, provided they were sentimental. By an uninterrupted course of such reading, she had acquired a taste for anecdotes, private history, and all that relates to the effects of love, which she was led to think formed the great business of human life. Her heart had been a thousand times melted, and pierced, and smitten, and wounded, and was at last so mollified, that she felt the tenderest sentiments for every man, with little distinction. She could not pass a few moments in a private interview with a male acquaintance without being conscious of a sentimental attachment. She often doubted whether she ought, upon the whole, to rejoice or lament that she was endowed with such extreme sensibility. But to be sure, so it was, her poor heart was so full of love, that every one who approached might have a share unasked. Her voice was faint and tremulous; her refinements elegant to a degree inconceivable. She was hardly fit for this low orb. She was always miserable, except when pouring out her sentiments in letters to some beloved Eudoxus. She was, in short, too tender, too susceptible, too pure, too elevated, to live

in this world; and so every body said, till, in evil hour, she ran away with a corporal quartered in the town, and has never been heard of since.

Lesbia, when very young, wrote a few rhymes, which, as her age was considered, were much applauded by her friends. Flushed with praise, she considered herself as a second Sappho, and has ever since been devoted to the Muses. Her reading was chiefly confined to the poet's corner in newspapers, and her productions have rivalled her models. She composes ænigmas, acrostics, rebusses, and songs, for those little red pocket-books which are annually published for the ladies, and she has had the honour of gaining the reward for expounding the prize-riddle. Within the circle of her acquaintance she is much admired. If a wedding happens among any of them, she pays for her bride-cake with an epithalamium; and she keeps in her drawers, like haberdashers' wares in a shop, odes, elegies, and epigrams, adapted to every occasion. But while she is soaring on the wings of poetical genius in her study, her poor little boys and girls are left to the company of the scullion in the kitchen. Her mind is extremely active, and it is but justice to allow that she neglects nothing but her duty.

Of all subjects, politics seem the least adapted to the female character. Women are excluded by the rude framers of our constitution, from all legislative influence; and it is well known that public affairs are seldom treated with temper, either in writing or conversation. But the female politician is by no means uncommon. Cornelia derives all her learning, of which she thinks she possesses an ample share, from the miscellaneous pages of a newspaper. She has herself sometimes ventured to communicate a paragraph or two, and has been delighted, even to rapture, with the thought that a plan or con-

jecture of hers has been wafted throughout the empire by so rapid a conveyance. On common subjects she is mild and reasonable; but while the gentlemen are talking politics, she submits with great reluctance to the frigid rules of decorum, which require that she should pay attention to the ladies. Her colour comes and goes for a long time, till at last she can bear it no longer, and bursts out with a blaze of eloquence scarcely rivalled in the most famous schools of oratory—those of Athens and Billingsgate. A treaty of marriage was on foot some time ago; but after the preliminaries were all settled, and a day for the ratification of the articles fixed, a rupture ensued on the adjustment of the balance of power; and hostilities have not yet ceased, nor is a coalition of the parties likely to take place.

In these few instances, and in those many which observation of the world will supply, there seems to have been some genius, and a love of books, which, properly directed, would have led to great improvements. But vague industry and unguided emulation, stimulated to persist in a wrong path by the partial praises of friends and relations, have precipitated even the amiably disposed into unsupported and insupportable vanity, and caused them to distinguish themselves without acquiring honour or esteem.

To be affected in any way, is at all times, in all places, and in all degrees, to be disagreeable. But affectation of learning and authorship in a woman with very little merit, draws upon itself the contempt and dislike of both sexes. They who excel most in either are found by experience to be most candid and modest, to assume least, and to join in conversation with others without displaying the sense of their superiority. Indeed it often happens, that there is an amiable humility in true genius and learn-

ing which compels the possessor of them to think diffidently of his own character, amid the united praises of all around. Let her, then, who possesses the bright jewels of genius and learning take care to set them in a plain manner, and their lustre will display an additional brilliancy.

In the embellishment of the person, a sufficient degree of care is usually taken that nothing unbecoming shall have a place in it. A regard is commonly paid to age, rank, and every circumstance which can point out the line of propriety. But in adorning the mind, it is usual to attend to little else but the dictates of inclination. Yet there is certainly a kind of sexual difference in the minds of the sexes which admits and requires a different species of intellectual accomplishment. Œconomy, or the art of conducting a family, is said, indeed, to be the peculiar province of women; yet surely, as rational beings, their reason may properly receive the highest possible cultivation. Nor should their attainments occasion contempt or neglect, unless they are sullied by obtruding arrogance, by a masculine boldness, a critical severity, and an ill-timed and injudicious ostentation.

NO. LXXXVII.—ON THE FOLLY AND WICKEDNESS OF NEGLECTING A FAMILY AND CHILDREN FOR THE PLEASURES OF DISSIPATION.

Though it may be true, as it has been asserted, that one age is not better than another, yet it is obvious to remark, that the modes, if not the degrees, of vice have varied at different periods; and that, of modes equally reprehensible in themselves, some are particularly destructive. Whatever have been the

manners of preceding times in our own country, I believe it will be readily allowed, that the middle ranks were never universally affected with the love of a dissipating life till the present age. Domestic industry and œconomy, or the qualities distinguished by the homely titles of thriftiness and good housewifery, were always, till the present century, deemed honourable. They are now, however, discarded; and in their place have succeeded a passionate love of show without substance, a never-ceasing attention to dress, and an insatiable hunger and thirst after diversions, public and private.

Whoever considers the natural effect of excessive indulgence in relaxing and weakening the tone of the mind, will immediately perceive how pernicious it must be to human nature in general, and to each particular society. There can remain neither inclination nor ability for exertion, when the strings which should give elasticity are all loose or broken; and without exertion, what is man? Behold what he is in the effeminate court of an oriental tyrant. Sunk in sloth, and prostrate in meanness, poor human nature, in such a situation, scarcely equals, in spirit or ingenuity, the monkey and baboon.

But I mean not to enlarge on dissipation in general, but to consider its effects in the limited circle of private families; from which, however, it gradually extends its influence over the whole community, throughout all its departments, like the undulations of a pebble thrown into a pool.

Let us suppose a married couple in the middle ranks of life—(and I select my instances from the middle ranks, because they are the most numerous and important)—let us suppose them just setting out, as it is called, in the world. The first object, in many instances, is to form and extend connexions. The ostensible motive is the advancement of the fa-

mily interest; the real and most powerful motive, the love of various company, in continual succession. Dinners and suppers, dancing and card-playing, leave little time, and no inclination, for the sober business of the trade or profession. A neglected trade or profession cannot succeed; and the poor young people, after having spent the little and hard-earned patrimony which, it may be, their affectionate parents bestowed on them, live the rest of their lives in some poor lodging, in penury or servitude, or die of disappointment.

But if, by uncommonly good fortune, they avoid bankruptcy or ruin, yet their love of dissipation never fails to poison that happiness which it pretends to sweeten. It prevents them from performing the most indispensable duties, and living the life of rational creatures. All heads of families are presidents of little societies, which they are bound to regulate by precept and example. But how shall they be qualified to do this who are seldom at home, and who, when they are there, are constantly engaged in vanity? Their own corruption descends, with additional malignity of influence, to the lowest menial servant who has sought protection beneath their roof.

But let us consider them in the relation of parents. Nothing can be more inconsistent with the life of a lady who delights in the fashionable amusements than the care of her new-born child. Her dress would be disconcerted, and her shape spoiled, were she to attempt to feed it herself with the food which nature has made convenient for it. She could not be absent from home. She must be liable to interruption at all hours. Her health also must fail under so constant a fatigue, added to the necessary toils of the ball, the rout, and the card-table. Her physician, for she takes care to keep the doctor on

her side, declares, that, from the delicate imbecility of her constitution, it would be highly improper for her to submit to the exhausting task of suckling an infant. The little one, therefore, whose heavenly smiles would repay every maternal care, is sent to the cottage, or the garret, of some hireling nurse. There, amidst poverty, hunger, and nastiness, it drags a precarious existence, with no attention but the cold charity of a mercenary woman, who has often, at the same time, a child of her own to engross her maternal endearments. The mother, in the mean time, is engaged in the gay circle of an assembly, losing that money at cards, or spending it in dress and pleasures, which ought to pay her husband's creditors. Little thinks she how her poor infant, which ought to be fostered in her bosom, is bewailing, in the expressive language of tears, the neglect and the harsh treatment it undergoes in the dreary haunts of want and misery. Many a cold neglect, many a severe menace, and many a hard blow, does the sweet babe receive from the passionate and ignorant nurse, at which a mother's heart would bleed, if it were not lost to sensibility. Poor innocents! unhappy orphans! deserted in your helpless state by those who have brought you into a wretched world; may He who took the children up in his arms, put his hands on them, and blessed them, have pity on your woes, on those injuries which ye sorely suffer, but cannot have deserved!

Life, however, is not easily extinguished; and notwithstanding all the pains and inconveniencies which the child undergoes from want of food, from want of cleanliness, from want of those tender attentions which a mother only can pay, it may indeed survive; but what remains of its lot is even more miserable than that which has already passed. As it has always been absent from home, it is a

stranger there. Its parents feel but little natural affection for it; for natural affection fixes itself in the heart most deeply at that period when the infant is hanging at the breast, and smiling, as it were, with gratitude in the face of her who supplies it with delicious nourishment from her own vital current. Natural affection takes still firmer possession of the heart when the child begins to prattle, and to play those little tricks which none but a callous mind can behold without delight. But, alas! the little boy or girl are still considered as obstacles to pleasure at home. They pay a short and formal visit there, and are again dismissed to a nurse, locked up with servants in the garret, or transferred to their grandmother. The last is a most enviable lot, in comparison with the former, in which they not only experience harsh words and hard blows, but learn vulgar ideas, vulgar language, deceitful tricks, and habits of every kind, which must one day be unlearned.

As soon as they can walk firmly, and talk plainly, they are removed to one of those convenient schools, or academies, as they are called, where children, at a very early age, are received as into nurseries. In the subsequent course of their education they are constantly kept from home; or, if they are indulged in a visit of a few days, they see little but what tends to mislead them. They receive no fatherly advice; and, whatever learning they may acquire at their schools, they usually enter on the stage to act their part in the drama of life without judgement and without principles to regulate their conduct. There is sometimes added to their misfortune of being neglected and misled, that of being deprived of all share of their parents' possessions; who, in the gay circles of pleasure, not only spend tehir own property, but involve themselves and their paternal estates in debt, and in every species of distress-

ing and disgraceful embarrassment. There is no part of the family affairs of the dissipated votaries of pleasure which has not a tendency to ruin. They are themselves in a constant state of mortification and disappointment. Their object in pursuing a perpetual round of amusements is to obtain perpetual, unceasing delight; an object which human nature could never yet accomplish. They, of all others, are least likely to obtain it, who make pleasure a business, and, in prosecution of it, neglect their most important and their daily duties. Indeed, there is nothing more misapprehended than the nature of pleasure. Men are deluded by a name, and, catching at a phantom, lose the reality. The truest pleasure results from calm and moderate emotions. Noise, tumult, violence, disorder, take off the fine spirit from that which is otherwise formed to please, and leave little behind but dregs or disagreeable ingredients. Balls, assemblies, feasts, public diversions, cards, dress, various company, should be pursued only as, what they are, temporary amusements, and not the business of life. Ask those who are whirled in the vortex of fashion, whether they are happy? Notwithstanding they are engaged, without ceasing, in what the world call pleasure, they are as ready to complain of languor and of misery as any other part of mankind. Pride and vanity compel them to move with others of their rank or fortune; but their countenances and words abundantly testify that they have, at least, their share of human uneasiness. They feel, indeed, the satisfaction of being distinguished from the poor, because their fortunes enable them to pay for the distinction; but that happiness is but slenderly supported which is founded only on the gratification of a weak and unmanly vanity.

With respect to that particular part of the evil resulting from dissipation, the neglect and consequent

misery of families, it is certainly very extensive and important. Single men, and single women, however led astray by the false lights of their own vain imagination, suffer by themselves, or at least draw but a few in their train. But the whole rising generation must be endangered when dissipation is become universal among parents and the heads of families.

Selfish arguments may succeed when others fail; and I therefore wish I could convince the generality of a certain truth,—that there is really more pleasure to be found at the family fire-side, and in the regular performance of domestic duties, than in the never-ceasing pursuit of fashionable amusements. What is the delight of seeing an Italian or French dancer stand upon one leg, compared to that of beholding one's own smiling babes in the raptures of a game at play? What is the delight of glittering at a ball, a play, a masquerade, compared to that of a home, in which are found plenty, tranquillity, and love, uninterrupted by the extravagance, the folly, the pride, and the restlessness of that ignorant, empty, weak, and fickle, yet arbitrary tyrant, Fashion?

Not that the moralist is severe. He prohibits no moderate and reasonable enjoyments. He is too well acquainted with human nature, and with life, so to moralise. He maintains only, that, though dissipating pleasures may be allowed as a temporary relief, they are fatal to happiness and virtue when they are suffered to engage the whole attention, or to become the chief employment of life.

NO. LXXXVIII.—ON FORMING CONNEXIONS WITHOUT FRIENDSHIP.

One can never sufficiently admire the liberal spirit of the great philosopher and orator of Rome, who, in his fine Treatise on Friendship, has exploded the idea, that the prospect of advantage is the foundation of this virtuous union; and asserted, that it owes its origin to a conviction of mutual excellence in morals and disposition.

This generous opinion appears still greater and more amiable when it is contrasted with the precepts and the practices of later ages, and particularly of the present. It is now one of the first admonitions given to a young man, who is entering on the career of life, that he must at all events make connexions. And instead of informing him that he is to be directed in his choice of them by the appearance of moral and mental excellence, according to the sublime ideas of the noble Roman, his sagacious monitors suggest to him, that he is to be solely guided by the prospect of his interest and advancement in the road of avarice and ambition. Let a poor man of approved character, learning, and genius, and a rich man of fashion, with no pretensions to either, be introduced to a sensible and prudent youth, initiated in what is called the knowledge of the world, and you will see that, while the rich man is viewed with submission, complacence, and treated with almost idolatrous attention, the poor man stands by unnoticed, and probably despised. On the slight acquaintance of a first introduction, the young proficient in worldly wisdom will not fail to call at the rich man's house, and leave a card with most respectful compliments; he would not come into the neighbourhood without paying that respect on any account whatever: he is not half so scrupulous

about going to church, and paying his court to his Maker; but at the very time while he is bowing at the threshold of the rich man, the philosopher shall pass by, and because he possesses only a competency without superfluity, and without influence, he shall not be honoured with the common civility of a salutation. For it is a maxim with mere worldly minds, that, as it is an honour to know and be known to persons of fortune and title, so it is a disgrace to acknowledge the slightest acquaintance with those who have nothing to recommend them but honour, spirit, learning, and virtue.

The formation of connexions is considered as so important, that it becomes, in effect, the principal object in the mean Chesterfieldian system of education. The boy whose parents are professed people of the world, would not, on any account, fail to place him at a school to which the sons of the nobility are often sent; though they are ready to confess, that little learning and great profligacy are the usual acquisitions in it. If the boy has grown intimate with the son of a duke, a lord, or a baronet, his parents are better pleased with him than if he had learned by heart all Horace, Virgil, and Homer. There is no submission so unmanly, and no attention so servile, but he is ready to pay them with alacrity, in accomplishing the important object of forming connexions. The mind is rendered, by these means, low and abject; and though the boy may afterwards rise to the honour of being a nobleman's chaplain, or his travelling companion, yet he will retain, through life, and after he is promoted to the highest stations by his patron, the sentiments and spirit of his lordship's footman or valet-de-chambre.

A man unacquainted with the world might suppose, that the readiest road to preferment, in several

of the professions, is to acquire the knowledge and accomplishments which are necessary to a skilful practice of them. But this is really not the case. The surest and most compendious method pointed out by the wise men of this world is to form connexions. Accordingly we observe many persons in the professions, who aim at distinction and advancement, by no means confining themselves to their libraries, or growing pale over their professional pursuits, but studying the graces of dress and address, and the arts of simulation and dissimulation. We see them frequenting all public places, giving and receiving invitations to dinners and suppers, and evidently spending so much time in dissipation, as to leave scarcely an hour in a day for reading and study.

But would you forbid a young man the formation of connexions, by which so many have availed themselves, and risen to real and deserved grandeur? By no means; I would only teach him to preserve a just reverence for himself, and to despise all riches and all honours which must be purchased at the expense of truth, virtue, and a manly spirit. I would, like others, advise every young man (and it is chiefly to the young that I presume to suggest admonitions) to form connexions, or rather friendships; but to be guided in his choice of them by personal merit and approved character. I do not say, for it would be unnatural and unwise, that he should neglect interest, or despise advancement, when it can be procured consistently with the spirit and integrity of an honest and delicate mind. If preferment comes unlooked for, and unsought by servile compliance, it is an honour as well as an advantage, and is doubly welcome. But if I must sacrifice my reason and my conscience, my honour and my freedom, in forming connexions and pur-

suing preferment, I relinquish the chase, and eagerly retire to competency, contentment, and liberty.

NO. LXXXIX.—AN ADDRESS TO A YOUNG SCHOLAR, SUPPOSED TO BE IN THE COURSE OF A LIBERAL EDUCATION AT SCHOOL.

YOUR parents have watched over your helpless infancy, and conducted you, with many a pang, to an age at which your mind is capable of manly improvement. Their solicitude still continues, and no trouble nor expense is spared in giving you all the instructions and accomplishments which may enable you to act your part in life as a man of polished sense and confirmed virtue. You have, then, already contracted a great debt of gratitude to them. You can pay it by no other method but by using the advantages which their goodness has afforded you.

If your endeavours are deficient, it is in vain that you have tutors, books, and all the external apparatus of literary pursuits. You must love learning, if you intend to possess it. In order to love it, you must feel its delights; in order to feel its delights, you must apply to it, however irksome at first, closely, constantly, and for a considerable time. If you have resolution enough to do this, you cannot but love learning; for the mind always loves that to which it has been long, steadily, and voluntarily attentive. Habits are formed, which render what was at first disagreeable, not only pleasant, but necessary.

Pleasant, indeed, are all the paths which lead to polite and elegant literature. Yours, then, is surely a lot particularly happy. Your education is

of such a sort, that its principal scope is to prepare you to receive a refined pleasure during your life. Elegance, or delicacy of taste, is one of the first objects of a classical discipline; and it is this fine quality which opens a new world to the scholar's view. Elegance of taste has a connexion with many virtues, and all of them virtues of the most amiable kind. It tends to render you at once good and agreeable. You must, therefore, be an enemy to your own enjoyments, if you enter on the discipline which leads to the attainment of a classical and liberal education with reluctance. Value duly the opportunities you enjoy, and which are denied to thousands of your fellow-creatures.

Without exemplary diligence you will make but a contemptible proficiency. You may, indeed, pass through the forms of schools and universities, but you will bring nothing away from them of real value. The proper sort and degree of diligence you cannot possess, but by the efforts of your own resolution. Your instructor may, indeed, confine you within the walls of a school a certain number of hours. He may place books before you, and compel you to fix your eyes upon them; but no authority can chain down your mind. Your thoughts will escape from every external restraint, and, amidst the most serious lectures, may be ranging in the wild pursuit of trifles or vice. Rules, restraints, commands, and punishments, may, indeed, assist in strengthening your resolution; but, without your own voluntary choice, your diligence will not often conduce to your pleasure or advantage. Though this truth is obvious, yet it seems to be a secret to those parents who expect to find their son's improvement increase in proportion to the number of tutors and external assistances which their opulence has enabled them to provide. These assistances,

indeed, are sometimes afforded, chiefly that the young heir to a title or estate may indulge himself in idleness and nominal pleasures. The lesson is construed to him, and the exercise written for him, by the private tutor, while the hapless youth is engaged in some ruinous pleasure, which at the same time prevents him from learning any thing desirable, and leads to the formation of destructive habits, which can seldom be removed.

But the principal obstacle to improvement at your school, especially if you are too plentifully supplied with money, is a perverse ambition of being distinguished as a boy of spirit in mischievous pranks, in neglecting the tasks and lessons, and for every vice and irregularity which the puerile age can admit. You will have sense enough, I hope, to discover, beneath the mask of gaiety and good-nature, that malignant spirit of detraction, which endeavours to render the boy who applies to books, and to all the duties and proper business of the school, ridiculous. You will see, by the light of your reason, that the ridicule is misapplied. You will discover that the boys who have recourse to ridicule, are, for the most part, stupid, unfeeling, ignorant, and vicious. Their noisy folly, their bold confidence, their contempt of learning, and their defiance of authority, are, for the most part, the genuine effects of hardened insensibility. Let not their insults and ill-treatment dispirit you. If you yield to them with a tame and abject submission, they will not fail to triumph over you with additional insolence. Display a fortitude in your pursuits equal in degree to the obstinacy in which they persist in theirs. Your fortitude will soon overcome theirs, which is seldom any thing more than the audacity of a bully. Indeed, you cannot go through a school with ease to yourself, and with success,

without a considerable share of courage. I do not mean that sort of courage which leads to battles and contentions, but which enables you to have a will of your own, and to pursue what is right amidst all the persecutions of surrounding enviers, dunces, and detractors. Ridicule is the weapon made use of at school, as well as in the world, when the fortresses of virtue are to be assailed. You will effectually repel the attack by a dauntless spirit and unyielding perseverance. Though numbers are against you, yet, with truth and rectitude on your side, you may be IPSE AGMEN, though alone, yet equal to an army.

By laying in a store of useful knowledge, adorning your mind with elegant literature, improving and establishing your conduct by virtuous principles, you cannot fail of being a comfort to those friends who have supported you, of being happy within yourself, and of being well received by mankind. Honour and success in life will probably attend you. Under all circumstances you will have an internal source of consolation and entertainment, of which no sublunary vicissitude can deprive you. Time shows how much wiser is your choice than that of your idle companions, who would gladly have drawn you into their association, or rather into their conspiracy, as it has been called, against good manners, and against all that is honourable and useful. While you appear in society as a respectable and valuable member of it, they have sacrificed at the shrine of vanity, pride, extravagance, and false pleasure, their health and their sense, their fortunes and their characters.

NO. XC.—THE WANT OF PIETY ARISES FROM THE WANT OF SENSIBILITY.

It appears to me, that the mind of man, when it is free from natural defects and acquired corruption, feels no less a tendency to the indulgence of devotion than to virtuous love, or to any other of the more refined and elevated affections. But debauchery and excess contribute greatly to destroy all the susceptible delicacy with which nature usually furnishes the heart; and, in the general extinction of our better qualities, it is no wonder that so pure a sentiment as that of piety should be one of the first to expire.

It is certain that the understanding may be improved in a knowledge of the world, and in the arts of succeeding in it, while the heart, or whatever constitutes the seat of the moral and sentimental feelings, is gradually receding from its proper and original perfection. Indeed, experience seems to evince, that it is hardly possible to arrive at the character of a complete man of the world without losing many of the most valuable sentiments of uncorrupted nature. A complete man of the world is an artificial being; he has discarded many of the native and laudable tendencies of his mind, and adopted a new system of objects and propensities of his own creation. These are commonly gross, coarse, sordid, selfish, and sensual. All or either of these attributes tend directly to blunt the sense of every thing liberal, enlarged, disinterested; of every thing which participates more of an intellectual than of a sensual nature. When the heart is tied down to the earth by lust and avarice, it is not extraordinary that the eye should be seldom lifted up to heaven. To the man who spends his Sunday

(because he thinks the day fit for little else) in the counting-house, in travelling, in the tavern, or in the brothel, those who go to church appear as fools, and the business they go upon as nonsensical. He is callous to the feelings of devotion; but he is tremblingly alive to all that gratifies his senses or promotes his interest.

It has been remarked of those writers who have attacked Christianity, and represented all religions merely as diversified modes of superstition, that they were indeed, for the most part, men of a metaphysical and a disputatious turn of mind, but usually little distinguished for benignity and generosity. There was, amidst all their pretensions to logical sagacity, a cloudiness of ideas, and a coldness of heart, which rendered them very unfit judges on a question in which the heart is chiefly interested; in which the language of nature is more expressive and convincing than all the dreary subtleties of the dismal metaphysicians. Even the reasoning faculty, on which we so greatly value ourselves, may be perverted by excessive refinement; and there is an abstruse, but vain and foolish, philosophy, which philosophizes us out of the noblest parts of our rational nature. One of those parts of us is our sense of religion, of which not one of those brutes which the philosophers most admire, and to whose rank they wish to reduce us, is found in the slightest degree to participate.

Such philosophers may be called, in a double sense, the enemies of mankind. They not only endeavour to entice man from his duty, but to rob him of a most exalted and natural pleasure. Such, surely, is the pleasure of devotion. For when the soul rises above this little orb, and pours its adoration at the throne of celestial Majesty, the holy fervour which it feels, is itself a rapturous delight.

Neither is this a declamatory representation, but a truth felt and acknowledged by all the sons of men, except those who have been defective in sensibility, or who hoped to gratify the pride or the malignity of their hearts by singular and pernicious speculation.

Indeed, all controversial and metaphysical writings on the subject of religion, are unfavourable to genuine piety. We do not find either that the most renowned polemics in the church militant, or the profoundest among the school divines, were at all more attentive than others to the common offices of religion, or that they were actuated by any peculiar degree of devotion. The truth is, their religion centred in their heads, whereas its natural region is the heart!—confined, alas! in colleges or libraries, unacquainted with all the tender charities of husband, father, brother, friend; some of them have almost forgotten that they possess a heart. It has long ceased to beat with the pulsations of love and sympathy, and has been engrossed by pride on conquering an adversary in the syllogistic combat, or by impotent anger on a defeat. With such habits, and so defective a system of feelings, can we expect that a doctor of the Sorbonne, or the disputing professor of divinity, should ever feel the pure flame of piety that glowed in the bosoms of Mrs. Rowe, Mrs. Talbot, or Mr. Nelson?

An inexperienced and unobservant man might expect to find extraordinary devotion and piety in the chapels and colleges of our English universities. Our young academics are summoned to prayers in some colleges not less often than four times every day throughout the year. But do they attend voluntarily, or in obedience to a statute? Is there any particular piety or decency in the performance of collegiate worship? Quite the reverse: for, it is

observed, that in no places of worship are the prayers read in a more careless or perfunctory manner; in none less appearance of devotion than in the chapel of a college. The reason is, that those who are *forced* to attend in them consist, for the most part, either of thoughtless youth, or of dry logicians and metaphysicians, who, in the towering heights of their wisdom, are superior to the weaknesses of a devotee. I have seen in many a country-church, where the congregation consisted only of honest husbandmen and their families, more appearance of devotion than is usually visible in the seats of learning and of religion. Men shut up in cloisters, with every want supplied by the bounty of founders and benefactors, and *compelled* to frequent the house of prayer, are less likely to feel the ardour of devotion, than the common tribes of mankind, warmly engaged in the busy scenes of many-coloured life, and deeply impressed with the vicissitudes of joy and sorrow.

It is however certain, that a devotional taste and habit are very desirable in themselves, exclusive of their effects in meliorating the morals and disposition, and promoting present and future felicity. They add dignity, pleasure, and security to any age: but to old age they are the most becoming grace, the most substantial support, and the sweetest comfort. In order to preserve them, it will be necessary to preserve our sensibility; and nothing will contribute so much to this purpose as a life of temperance, innocence, and simplicity.

NO. XCI.—ON THE PLEASURES OF A GARDEN.

NOT he alone is to be esteemed a benefactor to mankind who makes an useful discovery, but he also

who can point out and effectually recommend an innocent and obvious pleasure. Of this kind are all the pleasures arising from the observation of nature, and they are highly agreeable to every taste uncorrupted by vicious indulgence.

There will always be many in a rich and civilised country, who, as they are born to the enjoyment of competent estates, engage not in business, either civil or professional. But the restless mind must either find or make an object. Pleasure, therefore, becomes to the unemployed a serious pursuit. Whatever is its essence, and whatever the declaimer may urge against it, pleasure will be sought by all who possess the liberty of election. It becomes, then, incumbent on the moralist, not only to urge the performance of duty, but to recommend objects that please without enervating the mind, and gratify desire without corrupting the principles.

Rural scenes, of almost every kind, are delightful to the mind of man. The verdant plain, the flowery mead, the meandering stream, the playful lamb, the warbling of birds, are all capable of exciting emotions gently agreeable. But the misfortune is, that the greater part are hurried on in the career of life with too great rapidity to be able to give attention to that which solicits no passion. The darkest habitation in the dirtiest street of the metropolis, where money can be earned, has greater charms, with many, than the groves of Hagley.

Yet the patron of refined pleasure, the elegant Epicurus, fixed the seat of his enjoyment in a garden. He was of opinion, that a tranquil spot, furnished with the united sweets of art and nature, was the best adapted to delicate repose. And even the severer philosophers of antiquity were wont to

discourse with peculiar delight in the shade of a spreading tree in some cultivated plantation.

It is obvious, on intuition, that nature often intended solely to please the eye in her vegetable productions. She decorates the floweret that springs beneath our feet in all the perfection of external beauty. She has clothed the garden with a constant succession of various hues. Even the leaves of the tree undergo a pleasing vicissitude. The fresh verdure which they exhibit in the spring, the various shades which they assume in summer, the yellow and russet tinge of autumn, and the nakedness of winter, afford a constant pleasure to a lively imagination. From the snow-drop to the moss-rose, the flower-garden displays an infinite variety of shape and colour. The taste of the florist has been ridiculed as trifling; yet surely without reason. Did nature bring forth the tulip and the lily, the rose and the honeysuckle, to be neglected by the haughty pretender to superior reason? To omit a single social duty for the cultivation of a polyanthus, were ridiculous as well as criminal; but to pass by the beauties lavished before us without observing them, is no less ingratitude than stupidity. A bad heart finds little amusement but in a communication with the ambitious world, where scope is given for the indulgence of selfish passions; but an amiable disposition is commonly known by a taste for the beauties of the animal and vegetable creation.

The northern countries of Europe are by no means well adapted to the true enjoyment of rural scenery. Our vernal seasons, which the poets celebrate in all the luxuriance of description, are commonly rendered cold and uncomfortable by the long continuance of an easterly wind. Our poets

borrowed their ideas of a spring from the poets of Italy, who collected theirs from nature in their climate. A genial day in April is among us the subject of general congratulation. And while the lilac blossoms, and the laburnum drops its golden clusters, the shivering possessor of them is constrained to seek warmth at the side of his chimney. Yet from the temperature of our climate we derive a beauty unknown in the gardens of a warmer country. Few objects are more pleasing than the smooth lawn; but the soft verdure which constitutes its beauty is not to be found in more southern climates. It is certainly true, that the rarity of our truly vernal weather, like that of other delights, increases the pleasure of it; and it is probable, for this reason, that an Englishman, notwithstanding his complaints against his atmosphere, enjoys the pleasures of a garden in their full perfection. A fine day, says Sir William Temple, is a kind of a sensual pleasure; but surely it would cease to be such if every day were fine.

A practical attention to a garden is by some esteemed a degrading employment. It is true, indeed, that pastoral and agricultural manners, if we may form a judgement from the dignified descriptions of Virgil, are greatly degenerated. The employments of shepherds and husbandmen are now become mean and sordid. The work of the garden is usually left to a peasant. Nor is it unreasonable to assign the labour which wearies without amusement to those who are sufficiently amused by the prospect of their wages. But the operations of grafting, of inoculating, of pruning, of transplanting, are curious experiments in natural philosophy; and that they are pleasing as well as curious, those can testify who remember what they felt on seeing

their attempts in the amusement of practical gardening attended with success.

Among the employments suitable to old age, Cicero has enumerated the superintendence of a garden. It requires no great exertion of mind or body; and its satisfactions are of that kind which please without violent agitation. Its beneficial influence on health is an additional reason for an attention to it at an age when infirmities abound.

In almost every description of the seats of the blessed, ideas of a garden seem to have predominated. The word Paradise itself is synonymous with garden. The fields of Elysium, that sweet region of poesy, are adorned with all that imagination can conceive to be delightful. Some of the most pleasing passages of Milton are those in which he represents the happy pair engaged in cultivating their blissful abode, the garden of Eden. Poets have always been delighted with the beauties of a garden. Lucan is represented by Juvenal as reposing in his garden. Virgil's Georgics prove him to have been captivated with rural scenes; though, to the surprise of his readers, he has not assigned a book to the subject of a garden. Our Shenstone made it his study; but, with all his taste and fondness for it, he, it must be confessed, was not happy in it. The captivating scenes which he created at the Leasowes afforded him, it is said, little pleasure in the absence of spectators. The truth is, he made the embellishment of his grounds, which should have been the amusement of his life, the business of it; and involved himself in such troubles by the expenses it occasioned, as necessarily excluded the tranquil enjoyment of a scene which nature and art had combined to render delightful.

It is the lot of few, in comparison, to possess ter-

ritories like his, extensive and sufficiently well adapted to constitute an ornamented farm. Still fewer are capable of supporting the expense of preserving it in good condition. But let not the rich suppose they have appropriated the pleasures of a garden. The possessor of an acre, or a smaller portion, may receive a real pleasure from observing the progress of vegetation, even in a plantation of culinary plants. A very limited tract, properly attended to, will furnish ample employment for an individual. Nor let it be thought a mean care; for the same hand that raised the cedar formed the hyssop on the wall. Even the orchard, cultivated solely for advantage, exhibits beauties unequalled in the shrubbery; nor can the green-house produce an appearance to exceed the blossom of the apple and the almond.

Amusement reigns, says Dr. Young, man's great demand. Happy were it, if the amusement of a garden were more generally relished. It would surely be more conducive to health, and the preservation of our faculties to extreme old age, were that time which is now devoted to the dice and to the card-table spent in the open air, and in active employment, amidst the beauties of cultivated nature.

NO. XCII.—ON THE GRAVE AND GAY SPECIES OF PHILOSOPHY.

The world has ever been viewed by men of different dispositions in a light totally different. The thoughtful and melancholy have represented it as a vale of misery; the gay and the volatile, as a theatre abounding with delightful entertainments, if

the spectators are but in good humour. The whole difference, indeed, it has been said, arises from the various state of the minds of men, in health, in sickness, in prosperity, in adversity. It would seem probable that the greater part would be inclined to view things in the more agreeable light, from motives of self-interest and gratification. But the truth is, there are almost as many followers of Heraclitus as of Democritus.

That there is an essential difference in the original form of minds, there is no doubt; and to this cause is principally to be attributed, that some are gloomy, others cheerful. But habit is often no less concerned than nature. For it is remarkable, that, among moral writers, those who have enjoyed wealth and the company of the great, and who consequently partook of various pleasures, have commonly chosen the comfortable kind of philosophy; while they who were oppressed by want, and excluded from enjoyment, have no less naturally represented life, such as they found it, as a state of misery, interrupted only by short-lived and unsubstantial gratifications.

The English nation is characteristically grave; and of course the graver kind of philosophy has been much cultivated in England. There are few books that please more generally than the Night Thoughts of Young. Hervey's Meditations are more frequently read than many works of humour; and Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress has given as much pleasure among the English vulgar as the Quixote of Cervantes.

But our increase of wealth, and our imitation of French and Asiatic manners, have greatly altered our taste and manners, if not natural disposition. We begin to relish none but the gayer kind of philosophy; and we have almost exploded tragedy

from the stage. Horace would at present be more read than Juvenal, and Lucian than Seneca.

Every admirer of dignified diction and of solid sense must be delighted with the Rambler; and yet it has been said, that the World, and other less solid performances, have been more read and approved. It must, indeed, be confessed, that those excellent papers induce a melancholy by no means compatible with an active, cheerful, or pleasurable life. They inspire virtuous sentiments, but they depress those spirits which are necessary to put them in practice. I venerate their justly celebrated author; I admire his great exertions; and when I assert, that the gloomy grandeur of some among his moral writings communicates a sympathetic sadness to the reader's mind, I by no means detract from his literary honours. He laboured under what he called a morbid melancholy.

The philosophy of Epicurus is in some degree adopted by the greater part of the moderns, most of whom embrace his tenets, who have scarcely heard of his name. The truth is, human nature is naturally inclined to pursue pleasure, and to avoid all that has the appearance of wretchedness and woe. Even they who devote themselves to melancholy find a gloomy pleasure in it; a pleasure scarcely recognised by the gay and luxurious, but yet a great and real pleasure.

The severe philosophy, though less agreeable to the gayer ranks, is the more favourable to virtue. Seneca and Antoninus are severe. They exhibit life in its less pleasing aspects, and exact duties not to be performed without painful efforts. But they call forth the latent powers of the mind, and, by requiring an exertion beyond the natural strength, really compel it to effect all that it is able. Indolence prevents men in general from effecting all that they

are able. The pleasurable system dissuades them from the attempt. And if there were not some austere instructors, and some faithful followers of them, there would not be active virtue enough in a community to preserve its political existence in a state of vigour.

In the earlier periods of society the grave philosophy is most cultivated, for then virtuous exertions are most necessary, and luxurious indulgences precluded. Success, and increase in wealth and glory, are the usual consequence. Luxury succeeds in a course, as certain, in all its stages, as any physical progress. A taste for a light, cheerful, fanciful philosophy, soon explodes the sullen precepts of rigid moralists. Manners are relaxed, and naturally bring on a declension of empire. At least all regard for liberty is lost; and the mind, enervated with pleasure, gladly sinks in the repose of despotism.

It is too evident to be denied, that in our own country the severer philosophy loses ground. This, among many others, is a symptom of corruption, and the harbinger of decay. An imitation of foreign manners has greatly accelerated this revolution in our sentiments. And, after all, it is a forced and unnatural change; for an Englishman, whether from the influence of climate, or some cause inherent in his constitution, is by nature grave, and disposed to admit manly thoughts, to practise manly actions, and to be a votary of what is called stern virtue.

The influence of books on the national manners in a community, of which almost every member devotes some part of his time to reading, must be important. And among other methods which might be used to excite the spirit of patriotism and heroic excellence, it might be proper to restore a

taste for solid and severe morality, and to explode those light, superficial, sentimental, and affected productions, which, while they please the sickly mind, increase its imbecility.

NO. XCIII.—ON MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTIONS.

It was the early wish of Pope, that, when he died, not a stone might tell where he lay. It is a wish that will commonly be granted by the mourners with reluctance. The affection of those whom we leave behind us is at a loss for methods to display its wonted solicitude, and seeks consolation under sorrow in doing honour to all that remains. It is natural that filial piety, parental tenderness, and conjugal love, should mark, with some fond memorial, the clay-cold spot where the form, still fostered in the bosom, moulders away. And did affection go no farther, who could censure? But, in recording the virtues of the departed, either zeal or vanity often leads to an excess perfectly ludicrous.

A marble monument with an inscription palpably false and ridiculously pompous, is far more offensive to true taste than the wooden memorial of the rustic, sculptured with painted bones, and decked out with death's head in all the colours of the rainbow. There is, indeed, an elegance and a classical simplicity in the turf-clad heap of mould which covers the poor man's grave, though it has nothing to defend it from the insults of the proud but a bramble. The primrose that grows upon it is a better ornament than the gilded lies on the oppressor's tombstone.

The prostitution of praise is injurious to virtue. That imaginary life after death, which consists in a

remembrance of our worth cherished in the breasts of others, though it is despised by the severe reasoner, has commonly been an additional motive for exertion to the noblest spirits that have dignified human nature. But when we see the studied panegyric engraven on the marble that encloses the remains of the worthless, we despise an eulogium that mankind are mean enough to bestow on every one that will pay the stone-mason. Thus one powerful motive is lost, which might operate on the generous in stimulating them to a worthy conduct.

On the tombstones of the truly great it is certainly right that an inscription should be written consistent with their dignity. In order to be so, it must not be prolix. When their names and age make all the sepulchral history of distinguished personages, it seems to be implied that the rest is sufficiently known; but when the marble ambitiously enlarges on their excellence, it argues that the world wants the information. It is better that the passenger, when he sees an eminent name, should recollect, while he strikes his pensive bosom, the virtues of him who lies beneath the tablet, than that his remarks should be anticipated by an obtrusive and ostentatious inscription.

The style of epitaphs usually adopted has been too diffuse. The noble ancients, those patterns of unaffected magnificence, consulted real dignity in the brevity of their epitaphs. As an historical monument, at an age when printing was unknown, they sometimes engraved the exploits of a warrior on the marble; but in general they recorded little more than the name of the departed. The Grecian muse sometimes poured the sweet melody of verse at the shrine of a poet, artist, or hero; but she never condescended to mean flattery, nor displayed the bloated ostentation of a modern panegyric.

There are many excellent epitaphs in the English language, both in verse and prose. In the diffuse kind, that on the infamous Chartres, inserted in Pope's Works, is a fine model. Westminster Abbey exhibits many inscriptions written with manly, forcible, and energetic elegance. The great fault has been, a redundance of epithets in the superlative degree.

We have also many fine poetical epitaphs. Those of Dryden and Pope are the most deservedly celebrated; though Pope's have been severely criticised by Johnson. In general, the metrical are inferior to the prosaic. Some of the best are crowded with antitheses, a fault which renders them inferior to the Grecian; and some of the worst, many of which are found in the most public cemeteries, stand forth a disgrace to national taste. The love of rhyme descends to the lowest ranks. The parish-clerk is commonly called upon for a stave or two of verses, by every rustic that can raise a post and rail to the memory of his relation; and there are few churchyards in the kingdom where that favourite stanza, "Afflictions sore long time I bore," occurs not more than once; yet I have often thought that if it had been in Greek hexameter and pentameter, it would have been culled as a choice flower for the Anthologia.

But our epitaphs are most commonly written in Latin; probably because it is intelligible to foreigners, and is capable of more elegance and elevation. Our country has produced many writers remarkable for beautiful latinity: accordingly we find inscriptions in every part of the kingdom abounding with classical expressions. The misfortune has been, that many of them have encroached on the province of heraldry; and real dignity has been lost in the affectation of it, in a tedious and circumstantial de-

tail of descents, pedigrees, and relationship. The reader is tired before he has obtained a clear idea of the character and family described. His eyes have failed, even if his attention persevered. The epitaph on the pious Nelson, for instance, consists of above eighty lines.

The punning and epigrammatic epitaph was much in fashion a century or two ago. That on Fair Rosamond at Godstowe might surely have been replete with the tenderest sentiment; but it is merely a wretched distich of puns and monkish rhymes. This species is at present quite exploded, and little need be said to prove its great impropriety. False wit is always misplaced; but the true seems to be excluded from the epitaph. Who can bear merriment or buffoonery on a tombstone? The tender and elegiac, or the manly and severe style, seems to be best adapted to the monumental inscription. But neither the pathetic nor sublime is compatible with the ludicrous.

The authors of our epitaphs are seldom known. One of the best that I can recollect was the classical Bourne. The few he has left us are master-pieces. That in Westminster Abbey, on Dickinson, the architect, is truly sublime.

In our island there has certainly been no dearth of genius for monumental inscriptions; though there is one circumstance which might induce a foreigner to think the contrary. The famous duchess of Marlborough is said to have offered, without success, five hundred pounds for an epitaph adequate to the dignity of her Duke. Her grace, whose taste was not very just, would probably have expected a history long enough to cover with inscription the unwieldy pile of stones called Blenheim-house. I cannot help thinking, that a tedious epitaph, minutely relating his achievements, would rather lessen than exalt him

in the eyes of mankind. Would not Alexander the Great have appeared beneath the dignity of his name, if it had been written on his tomb, that the son of Philip was reputed to have been, in his day, the wisest general, the boldest hero, the most accomplished man, with a hundred other encomiastic epithets? Would he have excited much admiration if he had been handed down to us merely in an epitaph abounding with those inflated superlatives which Gothic ideas of grandeur have now introduced? It might have served as a complimentary epitaph on an alderman who died of repletion; and would, perhaps, have borne some analogy to him in the circumstance of unnatural tumour.

NO. XCIV.—CURSORY THOUGHTS ON BIOGRAPHY.

Among the many arguments advanced to recommend the study of history, it has been said, that it teaches wisdom without the danger of experience, and, by pointing out the paths of those who have gone before us, facilitates the journey of life. History has been called philosophy teaching by examples. But, after all, it must be allowed, that civil history at large is less capable of regulating moral than political conduct. The descriptions of battles, the accounts of debates, the characters of kings and heroes, contain very little that can direct the actions of the private and the more numerous ranks of the community.

But an exact and authentic account of individuals who have greatly excelled in any of the departments of active or contemplative life, seems to afford a mode of instruction best suited to an animal, like man, prone to imitation. When a single charac-

ter is distinctly delineated, we can pursue every line with an ease equal to that with which the painter copies from an original picture placed before his eyes. We have the express authority of the pattern we have chosen to direct us in every emergency, and can tread, with implicit confidence, in the footsteps of the most distinguished men, without the suspense of deliberate selection. It is a remark of Aristotle, that the story of an individual, as it is a single object, is comprehended more fully, and therefore attended to with greater pleasure, than a history in which many personages are introduced.

For these reasons, biography appears to be more instructive than civil history, though it has commonly been written with a less degree of attention. Herodotus is all sweetness and harmony. Thucydides exhibits the solid and austere beauties. Xenophon, the Attic bee, presents us with a style flowing with honey. Livy displays a most masterly composition, and paints in glowing colours all that he relates. Sallust rivals his Grecian master Thucydides. Guicciardin and Vertot have exhibited in their writings some of the genuine graces of the historic muse. But among biographers, scarcely any can justly claim a rank with the writers of the golden age.

As a diligent collector of facts, as an entertaining narrator, as a warm friend to virtue, I venerate the name of Plutarch. His writings bear evident marks of extensive reading, and communicate much and multifarious knowledge, and always take the side of virtue. Theodore Gaza has said, that if all books were lost, and he might recover one, it should be Plutarch. Plutarch's Works are indeed an invaluable treasure of ancient learning; for he selected passages from books now totally lost, and inserted them very liberally in his works. Add to this, that

he is an admirable moral essayist. But his judgement seems not to have been always strong enough to manage the unwieldy mass of materials he had collected. He indulged the weakest superstition. He is ever relating stories which Horace calls ANILES, or the tales of old women. Merely for an ostentatious display of erudition, he digresses beyond all reasonable limits. His idea of drawing parallels, or comparing the lives of Romans with Greeks, was excellent; and he has sometimes drawn his parallels admirably, though, as the critics say, not without a partiality to his own countrymen. The critics have convicted him of this unphilosophical attachment in the comparison between Tully and Demosthenes, Cato and Aristides, Sylla and Lysander, Marcellus and Pelopidas.

They who are willing to allow Plutarch every other merit give up his style as harsh and inelegant. Though certainly an useful, he cannot be esteemed a fine or elegant writer; and whatever merit he possesses, his instance does not refute the assertion, that biographical has never yet equalled civil history.

The long and diffuse accounts of Plutarch have been compared to colossal statues; the concise histories of Cornelius Nepos to medallions. Cornelius Nepos has a claim, from the age he flourished in, from his language, and from his fidelity, to the rank of a classic; but by no means to the first rank. It is suspected by many, that, as Trogus was epitomized by Justin, so Nepos, as we have received him, was abbreviated by a writer who flourished under Theodosius in the decline of polite literature. The Life of Atticus, if we may pronounce from internal evidence, continues unaltered, and reflects great honour on its writer, as a fine picture of a beautiful original.

Diogenes Laertius, another biographer, chose a

subject well adapted to display ingenuity. The lives of the wisest men whom the world ever produced, if well written, would have been a most valuable acquisition to ancient learning. But, with a fine subject, he is deemed by the critics, and whoever reads him must agree with them, a poor writer.

It is to be wished that Tacitus had more frequently exercised his talents in biography. His Life of Agricola is, perhaps, the best biographical work that was ever composed. It is written in that beautiful energetic style, which characterizes this spirited historian; and it is more pleasing than his other works, because it exhibits not a deformed portrait. Mallet's Life of Bacon is a good imitation of it, and, I think, though it has been depreciated, a fine composition in the department of biography.

Suetonius probably drew his pictures from the life, and they are loathsome to behold. They are, however, useful to the philosopher, as they enable him to form a more complete idea of human nature in all the gradations of degeneracy and perfection. They are also tolerably well written. Concise, nervous, simple; they please by their perspicuity, and their freedom from ambitious ornament. To the honour of their author, it must be said, that he appears to have advanced nothing through flattery or resentment, nor to have suppressed any thing through fear, but to have paid an undaunted regard to veracity. Erasmus observes, that he wrote as freely as the emperors whom he described had lived.

It is matter of surprise and regret, that we have not more biographers. Thousands and tens of thousands, eminent in every accomplishment, whose examples might have instructed the world, are become as though they had never been. In our own country, it is true, that there are many biographical compilations, but they are for the most part incom-

plete. Wood's Athenæ, though a book that does honour to a most celebrated university, has no merit as an elegant composition. But I must not omit the tribute of praise to the writer of the Life of Cicero; who has given us a most accurate account of one of the greatest men that ever lived, in a style truly classical and manly. The public is also indebted to the author of the Rambler for many masterly pieces of biography. His portraits would be more universally and permanently pleasing, if he had not too often indulged his spleen, and in too many instances converted a harshness of feature into extravagant caricature. I never could admire either the writings or the life of the chief object of his panegyric, the unfortunate Savage; and I can scarcely read with patience his Life of Milton.

Worth is often unknown, or known imperfectly, till after death; till that period, when it is too late to learn particular circumstances with accuracy. Hence it has happened, that many of our second-rate authors and actors in every department of life, though richly deserving a place in the annals of fame, are recorded only in those volumes, where to be born and die, as Pope says, makes all the history.

To preserve their own actions from oblivion and misrepresentation, some writers have been their own biographers. The task requires great delicacy. The very attempt, indeed, implies a considerable degree of self-value; but it has been justified by the examples of Thuanus and others of inferior merit.

There has appeared in our times and country a biographical work on an extensive plan. The first edition of the Biographia Britannica was well designed, yet unequally, and upon the whole indifferently, executed. Many distinguished lives are totally omitted; many which are insignificant, te-

diously described. Though there was sometimes much labour and sagacity exerted, yet there were few masterly remarks, and scarcely any well written lives. Most of the articles were furnished by writers of no great repute; and there was every reason for a new edition. I wish the new edition had fallen into the hands of a good writer. If I might presume to suggest an improvement, I would advise, that elegantly engraved heads should be prefixed to every life, whenever they can be procured; and that the materials should not be collected from books only, but from the traditionary reports, and the manuscript letters remaining in the families of descendants. The names of the living persons who communicate the hints should be added, both to secure and to confirm their authenticity. There is much danger of fabrication and forgery, where family vanity can be so easily gratified. Honesty, as well as accuracy and diligence, are required to make a Biographia Britannica a truly valuable work, worthy of being transmitted to the latest posterity.

NO. XCV.—ON HOSPITALITY, AND THE CIVILITIES OF COMMON LIFE.

In the days of Horace, our countrymen were reputed to be savage in their behaviour to strangers. Though in the present age the charge would be unjust, yet it must be owned, that there is a reserve in the manner of an unadulterated Englishman which seems to confirm the opinion, that he inherits a portion of that unsocial spirit which disgraced his ancestors. But, whatever may be his natural propensity, it is certain that, in the liberal intercourse and comprehensive education which prevail in the pre-

sent times, there is scarcely any country in the world where a more cordial hospitality is displayed than in some parts of England at a distance from the metropolis.

The days of Elizabeth have been extolled as the days of genuine hospitality. The doors were thrown open, and, at the sound of the dinner-bell, all the neighbouring country crowded to the smoking table. These were happy times, indeed, says the railer against modern refinement. Yet it has been justly doubted whether this indiscriminate hospitality was laudable and useful. There was something generous and magnificent in the idea, and it gave the nobles of the land the influence of kings over their neighbourhood. Yet, if its motive and its moral effects are considered, it will appear to be justly exploded. It proceeded from the love of power and ostentation, and it produced idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, and all their consequent vices.

Considered in a charitable light, as affording food to the hungry, the old British hospitality will be found a less useful mode than the modern institutions for the accomplishment of that purpose. It did not select its objects; it considered not the degrees of indigence or of desert. The consequence was, that it increased indigence and lessened desert; for experience has proved, that unnecessary alms, however amiable the motive of them, do a real injury where they mean a benefit. They promote idleness, by teaching poverty to rely on other aid than the efforts of an honest industry.

The great number of houses now established for the reception of travellers in every part of the kingdom, and the expeditious modes of travelling, which render delay unnecessary, have contributed to restrain and render superfluous that general hospitality which opened the door to all who came. Such

indiscriminate hospitality is no longer wanted; but there never was a time when judicious kindness and civility, of all kinds, were more liberally shown to strangers than the present. And whatever the old Romans, or the modern Gauls, may assert of British ferocity of manners, no Italian or Frenchman of character ever came to our separated shore (*toto divisos orbe Britannos*), without having felt delight at his hearty reception, and regret on his departure.

It seems probable that the better kind of hospitality keeps pace with civilisation. As the minds of a people are enlarged by improvements in knowledge, and communication with their neighbours, the selfish and morose affections gradually lose ground. In several parts of Europe, where social improvements have not yet reached, the traveller is either considered as lawful prey, or totally disregarded. On the other hand, we find the natives of the Society Isles, separated as they are from all the rest of the world, remarkably hospitable. Though fear might, in some degree, cause their civility to Europeans, yet it was not the sole motive of it; for we find their good offices, after all apprehensions were removed, evidently proceeding from the tenderest and most generous affection. On the first appearance of the English on their coasts, they naturally considered them as enemies, and boldly opposed their invasions. Many of them exhibited acts of heroism in defence of their country scarcely exceeded in the annals of antiquity. But no sooner was the branch of peace held out, than they received their wonderful visitors with open arms; with a humanity that reflects disgrace on the maritime villages of Europe, where a shipwrecked fellow-creature and fellow-countryman has often been destroyed for the sake of plundering his vessel. In other

islands discovered by our circumnavigators, we find that no kindness could mitigate the ferocity of the rude child of nature. The hospitality of barbarians, like all virtues that proceed not from principle, but from humour and accidental causes, is of little value. A clearer light than the light of nature is necessary to give a steady operation to the feelings of humanity.

The idea which Christianity has suggested of the relation in which all men stand to each other, is wonderfully adapted to promote universal hospitality. When we consider all men as brothers, we shall naturally receive the stranger within our gates with cordial kindness, as a relation whom we have never seen before, and to whom we wish to display some signal of our love. It is indeed true, that many who are justly esteemed worthy persons do not reduce this generous idea to practice; and the reason seems to be, that they suffer the attachments of domestic life, and the connexions of consanguinity, to engross the whole of their affections. Add to this, that the actual exercise of beneficence requires something which is less in our power than benevolence.

However just the complaints of the misery of life, yet great occasions for the display of beneficence and liberality do not often occur. But there is an hourly necessity for the little kind offices of mutual civility. At the same time that they give pleasure to others, they add to our own happiness and improvement. Habitual acts of kindness have a powerful effect in softening the heart. An intercourse with polished and humane company tends to improve the disposition, because it requires a conformity of manners, a conquest over selfishness and pride. And it is certain, that a sense of decorum, and of a proper external behaviour, will restrain

those whose natural temper would otherwise break out in acrimonious and petulant conversation. Even the affectation of philanthropy will in time contribute to realize it. The pleasure resulting from an act of kindness naturally excites a wish to repeat it; and, indeed, the general esteem which the character of benevolence procures, is sufficient to induce those to wish for it who act only from the mean motives of self-interest. Nothing is more generally beloved and admired than genuine philanthropy.

As we are placed in a world where natural evil abounds, we ought to render it supportable to each other, as far as human endeavours can avail. All that can add a sweet ingredient to the bitter cup must be infused. Amid the multitude of thorns, every flower that will grow must be cultivated with care. But neither pomp nor power are of themselves able to alleviate the load of life. The heart requires to be soothed by sympathy. A thousand little attentions from all around us are necessary to render our days agreeable. The appearance of neglect in any of those with whom we are connected, chills our bosom with chagrin, or kindles the fire of resentment. Nothing, therefore, seems so likely to ensure happiness as our mutual endeavours to promote it. Our single endeavours to obtain happiness, originating and terminating in ourselves, are usually unsuccessful. Providence has taken care to secure that intercourse which is necessary to the existence of society, by rendering it the greatest sweetener of human life.

By reciprocal attentions we are enabled to become beneficent without expense. A smile, an affable address, a look of approbation, are often capable of giving a greater pleasure than pecuniary benefits can bestow. The mere participation of the

studies and amusements of others, at the same time that it gratifies ourselves, is often an act of real humanity; because others would not enjoy them without companions. A friendly visit in a solitary hour is often a greater act of kindness than a valuable present.

It is really matter of surprise that those who are distinguished by rank and opulence should ever be unpopular in their neighbourhood. They must know the value of popularity; and surely nothing is more easily obtained by a superior. Their notice confers honour; and the aspiring heart of man is always delighted with distinction. A gracious look from them diffuses happiness on the lower ranks. But it usually happens that an overgrown rich man is not the favourite of a neighbouring country; and it is unfortunate, that pride or inadvertence often prevents men from acting the godlike part of making others happy, even when they might do it without inconvenience to themselves, merely by civility and attention.

NO. XCVI.—RELIGIOUS AND MORAL PRINCIPLES NOT ONLY CONSISTENT WITH, BUT PROMOTIVE OF, TRUE POLITENESS AND THE ART OF PLEASING.

A PHILOSOPHER who, in the austerity of his virtue, should condemn the *art of pleasing* as unworthy cultivation, would deserve little attention from mankind, and might be dismissed to his solitary tub, like his brother Diogenes. It is, indeed, the dictate of humanity, that we should endeavour to render ourselves agreeable to those in whose company we are destined to travel in the journey of life. It is

our interest, it is the source of perpetual satisfaction; it is one of our most important duties as men, and particularly required in the professor of Christianity.

I have therefore lamented, that they who have taken the most pains to recommend an attention to the art of pleasing have urged it only on the mean motives of self-interest. In order to attain the power of pleasing, they have recommended flattery and deceit; and though they have required in their pupils the appearances of many good qualities, they have not insisted on any substantial and consistent virtue.

It is my wish to exalt this amiable talent of pleasing to the rank of a virtue founded on principle, and on the best dispositions of human nature. I would separate it from those varnished qualities, which, like whited sepulchres, are but a disguise for internal deformity. A student of the art of pleasing, as it is taught in the school of fashion, is all softness and plausibility, all benevolence and generosity, all attention and assiduity, all gracefulness and gentility. Such, at least, is the external appearance; but compare it with his private life, with those actions which pass unseen, and you will find them by no means correspondent to the specious outside. You will usually find a hard heart, meanness, selfishness, avarice, and a total want of those principles from which alone true benevolence, sincere friendship, and gentleness of disposition, can originate. You will, indeed, find even the appearances of friendship and benevolence proportioned to the supposed riches and rank of him whose favour and patronage are cultivated.

It is a favourite maxim with those who teach the art of pleasing, that, if you desire to please, you can scarcely fail to please. But what motive, according

to their doctrine, is to excite this desire?—a wish to render all with whom you converse subservient to your interested purposes of avarice or ambition. It is a mean and despicable motive, when made the sole and constant principle of conversation and behaviour. If this life is the whole of our existence, if riches and honours are the chief good, if truth, honour, and generosity, are but names to adorn a declamation, then, indeed, they who practise the art of pleasing, according to the vulgar idea of it, or, in plain terms, according to the rules of Lord Chesterfield, are, after all, the truly and the only wise. But let us not deem so meanly of the world and its Creator; and if our favourable opinion of things be an error, it is not only pardonable, but glorious; and a generous man will say, like the noble ancient, he had rather err with a Socrates and a Plato, than be right with a Machiavel.

But, indeed, the virtues and the graces are much more nearly allied than they who are strangers to the virtues are willing to acknowledge. There is something extremely beautiful in all the moral virtues, clearly understood and properly reduced to practice. Religion is also declared to be full of pleasantness, in that volume in which its nature is described with the greatest authenticity. It must, indeed, be allowed, that he who is actuated in his desire of pleasing by morality and religion, may very properly add all the embellishments of external gracefulness; and he may rest assured, that the sincerity of his principles, and the goodness of his character, will ensure a degree of success in his attempts to please, which a false pretender, with all his duplicity, can never obtain or preserve.

If true politeness consists in yielding something of our own pretensions to the self-love of others, in repressing our pride and arrogance, and in a gen-

tleness of sentiment and conduct; surely nothing can be more conducive to it than a religion which every where recommends brotherly love, meekness, and humility. I know not how paradoxical my opinion might appear to the fashionable assemblies at St. James's, or to the professed men of the world, or to the proficient in what I call the *insincere* art of pleasing; but I cannot help thinking, that a true Christian, one who thinks and acts, as far as the infirmity of his nature will permit, consistently with the principles of his religion, possesses qualities more capable of pleasing than any of those which are said so eminently to have distinguished a Marlborough and a Bolingbroke. The pious and amiable Mr. Nelson seems to me to have deserved the epithet of all-accomplished much better than he to whom it has been so often applied; and, if we may judge by his writings, and the accounts given of his life, as, on the one hand, there never was a better Christian, so, on the other, there never appeared a politer gentleman. It is evident that he derived his art of pleasing not from a study of the world, or practising the tricks of little worldlings, but from the lovely qualities recommended in the Gospel, and from an imitation of the humble Jesus. They who study the art of pleasing will probably have recourse, as usual, to the many volumes written on the subject in the French language, or to the posthumous letters of a frenchified Englishman; and perhaps they would smile if an instructor were to refer them for the best rules that have ever been given to the Sermon on the Mount.

It is however certain, that the art of pleasing, which is founded on sincere principles, derived from religion and morality, is as far superior to that base art which consists only in simulation and dissimulation, as the fine brilliancy of the real diamond

excels the lustre of French paste; or as the roseate hue on the cheek of Hebe, the painted visage of a haggard courtezan. The insincere art of pleasing resembles the inferior species of timber used by the cabinet-maker, which, in order to please the eye, requires the assistance of paint; but the art which is founded on sincerity is more like that which displays far greater beauty in the variety and richness of its own native veins and colour. A short time, or a slight touch, destroys the superficial beauty of one, while the other acquires new graces from the hand of time.

The rules and doctrines of morality and religion tend to correct all the malignant qualities of the heart, such as envy, malice, pride, and resentment. In doing this, they cut off the very source of disagreeable behaviour. Morality and religion inculcate whatever is just, mild, moderate, candid, and benevolent. In doing this, they effectually promote a system of manners, which, without any sinister design in the person who possesses them, cannot fail of being agreeable. If to these substantial powers of pleasing are added the last polish of a graceful deportment, the habits acquired in good company, an acquaintance with men and manners, a taste for polite arts and polite books, no other requisites will be wanting to perfect the art, and form an all-accomplished character. A man will be under no necessity of hurting his conscience and reputation in cultivating I know not what of a deceitful and affected behaviour. He may be at once pleasing and respectable, and grow in favour with men without offending God.

It is one circumstance greatly in favour of that art of pleasing which I recommend, that, even if it should not always succeed in pleasing those with whom we converse, it will be sure to please our own

hearts; it will be sure to satisfy our conscience with a sense of rectitude at the time we are acting under its direction, and to furnish us with a tranquil delight, unalloyed by the remembrance of treachery and meanness, on a retrospect of our lives and conversation. It reconciles man to himself, and brings peace at the last.

NO. XCVII.—ON THE GUILT OF INCURRING DEBTS WITHOUT EITHER A PROSPECT OR AN INTENTION OF PAYMENT.

Among the various devices which young men have invented to involve themselves in difficulties and in ruin, none is more frequent than that of incurring debt at a very early age without any real necessity. No sooner is the aspiring youth emancipated from his school, or his guardian and superintendents, than he becomes, in his own idea, a man; and not only so, but a man of consequence, whom it behoves to dress, and make a figure. To accomplish the purpose of making a figure, some expensive vices are to be affected or practised. But as the stipends of young men just entering into life are usually inconsiderable, it is necessary to borrow on the most disadvantageous terms, or to purchase the various requisites of a pleasurable life on credit. The debt soon accumulates from small beginnings to a great sum. The young adventurer continues, while his credit is good, in the same wild career; but adieu to real pleasure, to improvement, to honest industry, and to a quiet mind. His peace is wounded. A perpetual load seems to weigh him down; and though his feelings may, by length of time and habit, become too callous to be affected by the misery

of his situation, yet he is lost to all sincere enjoyment; and, if he fall not a victim of despair, survives only to gain a precarious existence at the gaming-table, to deceive the unwary, and to elude the researches of persecuting creditors. Even if he be enabled, by the death of his parents or rich relations, to pay the debts which his youthful folly has contracted, yet has he suffered long and much, and lost the beginning of life, the season of rational delight and solid improvement, in distress and fears, in fabricating excuses and pretences, and in flying from the eager pursuit of duns and bailiffs.

But this folly, however pregnant with misery, is entitled to pity, and may, in some degree, admit of those usual palliations,—youthful ardour, and want of experience. Thousands, and tens of thousands, have ruined their fortunes and their happiness by hastily running into debt before they knew the value of money, or the consequences of their embarrassment. We pity their misfortune; and, in the first part of their progress, we do not usually accuse them of dishonesty.

But the habit of incurring debt, though in the earlier periods of life it may originate in thoughtlessness, commonly leads to a crime most atrocious in itself, and injurious to society. He who prayed against poverty, lest he should be poor, and steal, understood human nature. Difficulties and distresses have a natural tendency to lessen the restraints of conscience. The fortress of honour, when stormed by that sort of poverty which is occasioned by profligacy, and not defended with sound principles (such as men of the world do not often possess), has for the most part yielded at discretion. He, then, who began with incurring debt merely because he was strongly stimulated by passion or fancy, and was not able to pay for their gratification,

proceeds, when the habit is confirmed, and the first scruples dismissed, to contract debt wherever unsuspecting confidence will afford him an opportunity.

If he possesses titles, distinction, or any kind of eminence, he will not find it difficult to gain credit. Young tradesmen, desirous of making connexions, are ready to run any risque; and hope that, if it is long before they receive their money, they shall not be without the great man's patronage or recommendation. But here also they are often deceived; for the great man without principle, considers his creditors as his enemies, and never thinks of them but to contrive methods to avoid and deceive them. If he happens to receive any money, he takes care to expend it among strangers, who have no other demand upon him but for the commodity which he pays for at the time of purchase. The world is wide; and when one set of credulous tradesmen are wearied with expectation and disappointment, the great man migrates to another part of the town or country, and condescends to confer on some ambitious but unfortunate mortal the honour of dealing with him. Thus he goes on during the greater part of his life; and when the creditors are importunate, and the horrors of a gaol impend, he collects his property, and withdraws from the kingdom, or, living in disguise, enjoys his luxuries, and laughs at his deluded tradesmen. Indeed, as most ill qualities go together, his pride is so great, that he scarcely vouchsafes to bestow upon such low creatures as tradesmen a moment's consideration.

But while the builder, the draper, the tailor, the butcher, the baker, and the chandler, remain unpaid, the jockey and the horse-dealer, the mistress and the brother-gamester, receive ready money with ostentatious profusion. Sharpers and prosti-

tutes, with all the qualities of thievery, riot in those riches which ought to be paid to honest men, who, with their families, are reduced to a state of starving, by feeding, clothing, and accommodating some hardened profligate and extravagant debauchee. Who but must feel indignation when he sees a man in high life, as it is called, eating a joint of meat of some poor tradesman, whose children are at the same moment begging of their parents a morsel of bread? Who beholds, without abhorrence, my lord or sir John sitting joyous at the head of a plentiful table, supplied, *gratis*, with every article, by the father of those children?

Indeed, the pride and vanity of some persons, who value themselves on their birth, or their fashionable mode of life, induce them to look upon themselves as a superior order of beings, and to presume that they have a right to be still supported by their tradesmen in profusion and elegance, even after they are reduced in their circumstances, either by misfortune or misconduct. If an honest man makes his demand, he is impertinent; his insolence is not to be borne; he is dismissed; but not till he evidently shows that he will no longer supply the commodities in which he deals. On his dismission, some exception is taken to his account: a dispute ensues, and that dispute furnishes the fine gentleman or fine lady with a pretence for not paying the bill. In the mean time, card-parties, visitings, and all fashionable amusements, proceed as usual: for who would be so vulgar as to attend to the impertinence of the scum of the earth, or suffer one fashionable pleasure to be set aside by the clamorous importunity of a mean mechanic; though his meanness arises from his having spent his substance in supplying the person who despises him with the instruments of luxury, or even the necessaries of life?

The profligacy, the vanity, the unceasing pursuit of pleasure, and the passion for external appearance, which characterize the present age, are necessarily productive of expense: expenses occasion distress; and distress, where principles are deficient, dishonesty. No wonder, then, that in no age have sharpers, swindlers, and insolvent contractors of debt, so much abounded. There is hardly any mode of public life, especially in the metropolis, in which you can be engaged, without having your property exposed to the depredations of villains, who have made cheating a profession, and reduced the art of robbery to a regular system.

Many of the persons who live on the substance of others, by borrowing, purchasing, or employing, without intending and without being able to pay, make a splendid figure, and pass for gentlemen and men of honour. But, however they may felicitate themselves on their success, and in the gratification of their pride and vanity, I shall not hesitate to pronounce them more criminal and detestable than highwaymen and house-breakers, because to the crime of actual theft they add a most ungenerous breach of confidence.

NO. XCVIII.—CURSORY REMARKS ON THE LIFE, STYLE, GENIUS, AND WRITINGS OF PETRARCH.

ONE of the first and brightest luminaries which appeared in the literary horizon, after a long and dismal night, was the illustrious Francisco Petrarcha. He was born at Arezzo, as he informs us himself, though Vossius very ingeniously denies it. He became archdeacon of Parma, and canon of the cathedral church of Padua, and might have arrived at

the highest preferments which the popes can bestow, if he had not disdained some dishonest and humiliating compliances.

To form an adequate idea of the merit of the writers who arrived at excellence in the dawn of literature, it is necessary to consider with attention those peculiar circumstances which rendered even a mediocrity of learning a difficult attainment. Books were scarce, judicious instructors still more uncommon, and the powerful instigation of contemporary models in a great measure deficient. Petrarch's claim to entire originality is not, however, universally allowed. He certainly imitated Cino de Pistoja; and Bayle says, he stole many of his sentiments from him. Dante, indeed, preceded Petrarch; but I do not find that he made Dante his model. With real difficulties and impediments, and with few circumstances to excite a spirit of enterprise sufficiently ardent and persevering to surmount very formidable obstacles, it is really wonderful that any individual could, at the period at which Petrarch flourished, ascend, by his own efforts, the eminent heights of superior excellence.

Such, however, was the native force of Petrarch's genius, that, in the middle of an unenlightened age, he became celebrated throughout the civilised nations of Europe as an orator, philosopher, and poet.

His poetical fame is, indeed, the most distinguished. Formed with the finest sensibility of soul, he had the peculiar felicity of being born in a country whose language is the language of love. The ardour, the constancy, and the romantic nature of his passion, rendered him universally popular in an amorous and romantic age. In our own country he became the pattern of one of our earliest poets, Henry Howard, earl of Surrey. And amidst all the disadvantages of a Northern and Gothic language,

the English poet has celebrated his lovely Geraldine in strains which are said, by some, to display more of the genuine tenderness of nature than those in which the great Italian sung his Laura.

"In the sonnets of Surrey," says Mr. Warton, "we are surprised to find nothing of the metaphysical cast which marks the Italian poets, his supposed masters, especially Petrarch. Surrey's sentiments are for the most part natural and unaffected, arising from his own feelings, and dictated by the present circumstances. His poetry is alike unembarrassed by learned allusions, or elaborate conceits. If our author copies Petrarch, it is Petrarch's better manner, when he descends from his Platonic abstractions, his refinements of passion, his exaggerated compliments, and his play upon opposite sentiments, into a track of tenderness, simplicity, and nature. Petrarch would have been a better poet had he been a worse scholar. Yet, upon the whole, I should as soon think of preferring Surrey to Petrarch, as of preferring a Gothic country church to a Grecian temple."

It is certainly true, that several of the poets who have devoted themselves to the description of the tender passion have shown that they really did not feel it in its greatest strength and purity while they wrote. The love which nature inspires does not dictate antithesis, point, conceit, and witticism. But Ovid, the poet of Love, abounds with these even in his most impassioned verse. Cowley's Mistress is by no means distinguished by the language of passion. I know not that even the gentle Waller expresses the sentiments which a tender and ardent lover feels and utters. Hammond has written like one who was but little smitten with the tender passion. Petrarch, also, has often addressed his verses to the understanding, when they should have been

directed to the feelings; has endeavoured to please the imagination with an opposition of images, when all his skill should have been exerted in causing the nerves to vibrate at the touch of sympathy. The mind of the reader is disappointed, when, instead of the simple expressions of nature, he finds the subtilty of art and the quaint conceits of false wit; nor does he allow ingenuity on the subject of love to be a compensation for pathos.

It has been said, that the diction of Petrarch is obscure. The want of perspicuity arises chiefly from his having adopted a great many terms in the provincial language, which, since his time, has ceased to be colloquial in Italy, though it has been preserved by the poets in imitation of their master. The admission of antiquated expressions is allowed by the best judges to be an exquisite mode of adding a dignity to composition. It has been prescribed by the best critics, and practised by the best writers. And, with respect to the obscurity it may occasion, the fault is in the reader. Poetry has a language of its own. For the sake of elevation, it is constrained to seek a diction remote from conversation or familiar prose. He who reads and criticises poetry, ought to be acquainted with its peculiar and idiomatic language. Homer, Virgil, Milton, wrote in a diction which will not be understood by him who has been solely conversant in the prosaic writings of their several languages. This, indeed, may be justly said, that the dignity of the epopœa may require this method of contracting a venerable air, much more than the humbler strains of the plaintive inamorato. If any part of Petrarch's obscurity arises from the confusion of his ideas, or his perplexed method of expressing them, no veneration for his name must protect him from censure. Indeed, several very able critics have complained,

that they could not understand him without an interpreter.

Enough of his meaning and of his beauties has been understood by his own countrymen to give him the title of the Father of the Tuscan Poetry. The classical excellence of his language has contributed to give a name to the century in which he lived; for the Italians call it *the good age of their language*, and attribute the happy effect in a great measure to Petrarch. Sweet, indeed, are the greater part of his sonnets; sweet their language, and sweet their sentiments. Though criticism may point out quaintnesses and unnatural conceits, may censure one part as metaphysical, and another as affected, yet the sensible reader will not judge by parts, but by the whole effect of an entire piece; and if his feelings have been often finely touched, and his imagination delighted, he will give himself up to the magic of the poet, and, joining in the general applause, leave the cold critic to whisper his detraction disregarded.

The love-verses of some writers cannot be recommended without danger. But the sort of love which Petrarch felt, supposing the object a proper one, refines and ennobles humanity. It is a species of passion which was never felt in the slightest degree by the modern debauchee. It partakes something of the nature of religious devotion; and, while it elevates human nature in idea, it contributes something to its real exaltation. Chastity was the virtue of the age in which romantic love prevailed, and one virtue is allied to all. The age was virtuous, in comparison with those times in which love is degraded to its lowest species, and even the philosophers endeavour to reduce man to the humiliating condition of a mere animal.

But Petrarch is not to be considered only as an

Italian poet: he wrote Latin poetry with great reputation; and indeed, during his life, seems to have acquired more honour from that, than from his vernacular productions. It was for his Africa that he was crowned with laurel in the capitol of Rome. This work was a kind of heroic poem in honour of Scipio Africanus, "whose name," says he, "I know not how, was dear to me from the earliest age."

His Africa is acknowledged to be an imperfect work. It had not the last hand of its great author; but it abounds with historical matter, and with the fictions of poetry. The hand of a master is visible. The poetical fire sometimes burns with genuine heat and light. Yet, upon the whole, it is a work more conspicuous for genius than judgement, and wants that polish which a better age would certainly have bestowed. Had Petrarch written nothing but Latin poetry, he would have possessed but a subordinate place in the temple of Fame.

The prose works of Petrarch are voluminous. He indeed is honoured with the name of the Restorer of the Latin language. Great was his merit in recalling a language which had almost sunk into oblivion; yet, I think, it had been fortunate for the reputation of Petrarch if he had written all his works in his native language, which he possessed in perfection, and which had arrived, under the management of him and his contemporary, at the standard of classic elegance. Though he writes with spirit, abounds with striking and solid sentiments, and displays no inconsiderable share of learning, yet he cannot be called a good Latin writer. His style is harsh and uncouth; his sentences rugged and unpolished. There is a singularity and uncouthness of manner which sets him at a remote distance from the classics, and proves that he inspected their

works rather for their matter than their mode of treating it. At the same time, there is a native force and vivacity, which would have constituted distinguished excellence, if the writer had condescended to have become an imitator of the ancients. An affectation of originality has often spoiled an ingenious work, by rendering it quaint and disgustful. The greatest beauty of his prosaic writings, and a very exalted excellence it must be esteemed, is the serious regard which he pays to piety and morality, and that spirit of philosophy, which, though of a melancholy kind, is just and solid.

A reader is doubly pleased when he can turn from the works of a distinguished writer to his life with equal complacency. In the life of Petrarch, we find a noble and sublime spirit, which induced him to prefer his muse, his love, and his independence, to the favour of a papal despot. It is, indeed, the glorious privilege of genius to seek and to find its happiness from its own resources. Emboldened by the consciousness of its own strength, and feeling an indignation at many of the changes and chances of this world, and at the contumely of the proud and stupid, it is apt to spurn at worthless grandeur, and to despise those whom the multitude adores.

Human nature must always have an object suspended in its view. The lovely Laura was the object of Petrarch. The passion was romantic; the idea of her excellence imaginary; but it had a happy influence on the poet's mind. It called forth the latent fire of his genius, it exercised his fine fancy; and, though the poet pours his plaintive verse in strains which affect our sympathy, yet we are by no means to consider him as unhappy. For it is a truth collected from long observation on hu-

man nature, that the pleasure of the chase consists in the pursuit, not in the attainment; and that it is often better to expect than to enjoy.

I believe it is not on record, or even suspected, that the passion of Petrarch was criminally gratified. It is generally thought that it began and terminated in imagination. But yet it is impossible not to lament, that the object of the poet's fanciful idolatry was one on which he could not innocently place his affections.

NO. XCIX.—ON THE FOLLY AND WICKEDNESS OF WAR.

The calamities attendant on a state of war seem to have prevented the mind of man from viewing it in the light of an absurdity, and an object of ridicule as well as pity. But if we could suppose a superior being capable of beholding us miserable mortals without compassion, there is, I think, very little doubt but the variety of military manœuvres and formalities, the pride, pomp, and circumstance of war, and all the ingenious contrivances for the glorious purposes of mutual destruction, which seem to constitute the business of many whole kingdoms, would furnish him with an entertainment like that which is received by us from the exhibition of a farce or a puppet-show. But, notwithstanding the ridiculousness of all these solemnities, we, poor mortals, are doomed to feel that they are no farce, but the concomitant circumstances of a most woful tragedy.

The causes of war are for the most part such as must disgrace an animal pretending to rationality. Two poor mortals take offence at each other, without any reason, or with the very bad one of wish-

ing for an opportunity of aggrandizing themselves by making reciprocal depredations. The creatures of the court, and the leading men of the nation, who are usually under the influence of the court, resolve (for it is their interest) to support their royal master, and are never at a loss to invent some colourable pretence for engaging rival nations in the horrors of war. Taxes of the most burthensome kind are levied, soldiers are collected, so as to leave a paucity of husbandmen; reviews and encampments succeed, and at last fifteen or twenty thousand men meet on a plain, and coolly shed each other's blood, without the smallest personal animosity, or the shadow of a provocation. The kings, in the mean time, and the grandees, who have employed these poor innocent victims to shoot bullets at each other's heads, remain quietly at home, and amuse themselves in the intervals of balls, hunting schemes, and pleasures of every species, with reading at the fireside, over a cup of chocolate, the despatches from the army, and the news in the Extraordinary Gazette. Old Horace very truly observes, that whatever mad frolics enter into the heads of kings, it is the common people, that is, the honest artizan and the industrious tribes in the middle ranks, *unoffended* and *unoffending*, who chiefly suffer in the evil consequences. If the old king of Prussia had not been at the head of some of the best troops in the universe, he would have been judged more worthy of being tried, cast, and condemned at the Old Bailey, than any shedder of blood who ever died by a halter. But he was a king; but he was a hero:—those names fascinate us, and we enrol the butcher of mankind among their benefactors.

When one considers the dreadful circumstances that attend even victories, one cannot help being shocked at the exultation which they occasion. I

have often thought it a laughable scene, if there were not a little too much of the melancholy in it, when a circle of eager politicians have met to congratulate each other on what is called a piece of good news just arrived. Every eye sparkles with delight; every voice is raised in announcing the happy event. And what is the cause of all this joy? and for what are our windows illuminated, bonfires kindled, bells rung, and feasts celebrated? We have had a successful engagement. We have left a thousand of the enemy dead on the field of battle, and only nine hundred of our countrymen. Charming news! it was a glorious battle! But before you give a loose to your raptures, pause a while; and consider, that to every one of these nineteen hundred, life was no less sweet than it is to you; that to the far greater part of them there probably were wives, fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, sisters, brothers, and friends, all of whom are at this moment bewailing that event which occasions your foolish and brutal triumph; a triumph perfectly consistent with the basest cowardice.

The whole time of war ought to be a time of general mourning; a mourning in the heart, a mourning much more sincere than on the death of one of those princes whose accursed ambition is often the sole cause of war. Indeed, that a whole people should tamely submit to the evils of war, because it is the will of a few vain, selfish, ignorant, though exalted, individuals, is a phenomenon almost unaccountable. But they are led away by false glory, by their passions, by their vices. They reflect not; and indeed if they did reflect and oppose, what would avail the opposition of unarmed myriads to the mandate of a government supported by a standing army? Many of the European nations are entirely military; war is their trade; and when they

have no employment at home, or near it, they blush not to let themselves out to shed any blood, in any cause, to the best paymaster. Ye beasts of the forest, no longer allow that man is your superior, while there is found on the face of the earth such degeneracy!

Morality and religion forbid war in its motives, conduct, and consequences; but to many rulers and potentates morality and religion appear as the inventions of politicians to facilitate subordination. The principal objects of crowned heads, and their minions, in countries subject to despotism, are the extension of empire, the augmentation of a revenue, or the total annihilation of their subjects' liberty. Their restraints in the pursuit of these objects are not those of morality and religion, but solely reasons of state and political caution. Plausible words are used, but they are used only to hide the deformity of the real principles. Wherever war is deemed desirable in an interested view, a specious pretext never yet remained unfound. Morality is as little considered in the beginning as in the prosecution of war. The most solemn treaties and engagements are violated by the governing part of the nation, with no more scruple than oaths and bonds are broken by a cheat and a villain in the walks of private life. Does the difference of rank and situation make any difference in the atrocity of crimes? If any, it renders a thousand times more criminal than that of a thief, the villany of them, who, by violating every sacred obligation between nation and nation, give rise to miseries and mischiefs most dreadful in their nature, and to which no human power can say, Thus far shall ye proceed, and no farther. Are not the natural and moral evils of life sufficient, but they must be rendered more acute, more numerous, and more imbittered by artificial

means? My heart bleeds over those complicated scenes of woe, for which no epithet can be found sufficiently descriptive. Language fails in labouring to express the horrors of war amid private families, who are so unfortunate as to be situated on the seat of it.

War, however, it will be said, has always been permitted by Providence. This is indeed true; but it has been permitted only as a scourge. Let a spirit and activity be exerted in regulating the morals of a nation, equal to that with which war, and all its apparatus, are attended to, and mankind will no longer be scourged; neither will it be necessary to evacuate an empire of its members, for none will be superfluous. Let us, according to the advice of a pious divine of the present age, think less of our fleets and armies, and more of our faith and practice. While we are warriors, with all our pretensions to civilisation, we are savages. But be it remembered, that nothing in this essay, or in any other composition of its author, was ever intended, or could be fairly understood, to discountenance a truly *just* and *necessary* WAR OF DEFENCE. Wanton and *offensive* war is the subject of his reprehension.

NO. C.—ON THE EFFECTS OF INTEMPERATE STUDY ON THE HEALTH; AND ON THE DUTY OF PAYING REGARD TO THE PRESERVATION OF HEALTH.

THERE is in general but little danger lest good qualities and habits should be carried to excess. The moralist may, for the most part, recommend every laudable and useful practice without prescribing any boundaries to proficiency. The probability is,

that men will stop on this side, and not that they will go beyond the line of duty. But yet it is certain, that there are some ingenuous spirits, who, actuated by a generous emulation, advance in the pursuit of a favourite excellence with so immoderate an ardour and assiduity of application, as at once frustrates their purpose, injures their abilities, and destroys their happiness.

As I have, then, on many occasions, urged a very close attention to study, I think myself obliged, by motives of humanity, to suggest a few cautions which may prevent the evils of an intemperate application. I should indeed greatly lament, that any thing I have advanced in recommending to youth the cultivation of the mind, should lead them to neglect or injure that body on which the vigour of the mind greatly depends, and which, if it is disordered, often renders all other means of happiness and improvement ineffectual.

I am indeed the more inclined to enter on this subject, as I have seen very melancholy instances of nervous diseases entirely occasioned by intemperance in study, and its necessary concomitant, want of air and exercise. It is one circumstance peculiarly unhappy in these most unhappy of all diseases, that they seldom admit of a cure, and therefore great and early vigilance should be exerted in their prevention.

A great student ought to be particularly attentive to the regulation of his diet. We learn from the writings of physicians, that the labour of the brain draws off those spirits which are necessary to promote digestion. The least and the lightest food under which we can possibly be easy, according to the advice of the celebrated Cheney, is particularly proper for the student. Such a diet will not only render the spirits cheerful, and invigorate

all the faculties of the mind, but enable us to enjoy health with but a small share of exercise. Abstinence may however be carried to a destructive excess, and cause a fatal debility.

Exercise is to be taken on every opportunity. But a solitary walk or ride merely for the sake of exercise, and with no other object to stimulate our progress, as it is of all amusements the dullest, so it is often found rather hurtful than advantageous. The mind still meditates in solitude, and the body at the same time labours; so that both are exhausted at once; and the student returns to his closet, fatigued, dejected, and disappointed. Some little amusement must therefore be contrived, or some business engaged in, which may operate as a loadstone in attracting us, without being sensible of our own efforts, from our libraries, up the mountain, and along the forest, where Health, with all her thousand joys, delights to fix her abode. A few cheerful companions in our walks will render them abundantly more healthful; for, according to the ancient adage, they will serve instead of a carriage, or, in other words, prevent the sensation of fatigue.

Dejection of spirits is a certain consequence of intemperate study; but dejection of spirits, long continued, cannot consist with health. After a morning spent in a closer application than common, it will be right to devote the rest of the day to good company and innocent pleasures. Music is one of those pleasures, and the most delightful soother of the wearied mind. The heart dances at the sound of the lyre; fresh spirits animate the veins; the clouds of dejection are dissipated, and the soul shines out once more, like the sun after a mist in the blue expanse of æther.

Nocturnal studies, too long and too closely continued, seldom fail to injure the eyes, and, together with them, the whole nervous system. They who

are impelled by necessity to work by night and by day, must, indeed, submit with patience to their destiny; but that he who is master of his time should chain himself down to a more exhausting toil than the labour of the galley-slave, is a species of folly approaching to insanity. And, indeed, I know of nothing more likely to produce madness than intemperate study, with want of exercise, want of air, and want of sleep. It will, after all, be but a poor comfort to have gone through a whole library, and to have lost our eyes and our senses in the course of the laborious progress.

Every man of sense will make use of all the known methods of securing his health, were it merely on selfish motives, and for the sake of preserving his faculties and prolonging his life. But, omitting all selfish regards, I cannot help thinking that an attention to the preservation of health is an IMPORTANT DUTY. I do not recollect that it has often been recommended as a duty. But, since our health is greatly in our own power; since we all enter into the world to engage in many active and necessary employments, and since the want of health will render us incapable of them; I cannot help thinking that the care of our health may be numbered among the duties of indispensable obligation. A sound constitution of body is a blessing of Heaven; and not to bestow the utmost vigilance in preserving a pearl of so inestimable a price, is a contempt of the gift, an insult on the Giver, and a species of impious ingratitude.

It is commonly said, that he who wants the advice of physicians in the regulation of his usual diet, after the age of forty, wants also understanding; a defect which no physician can supply. It is indeed certain, that, at the age of forty, a sufficient degree of experience of what may be agreeable or disagreeable to the constitution may have

been collected. But few of us are willing to do all that we are able; few of us are so attentive, in the first portion of life, to the animal œconomy, as to remark with accuracy the causes of those slight indispositions which are occasioned by accidental excess in the gay and thoughtless hours of convivial enjoyment. We participate in the pleasures of the table from friendly and benevolent motives, however they may undermine the constitution. We are apt to think, that it would be too selfish to refuse to partake of the enjoyments of others merely to preserve our own health. The midnight assembly and the luxurious banquet are often less sought for their own sakes, than from good-nature and a social disposition. But, perhaps, if we considered that we are not taking care of ourselves merely on our own account, but for others, for our parents and our children, for our friends and for the public, we should not deem a scrupulous regard to health, though it may lead us to avoid the feast and the revel, either ungenerous or unsocial. It would appear in the light of a very serious duty, derived from an obedience to the will of Heaven, and from the regard we owe to our neighbour; and we should be obliged to confess, that the nominal pleasures of excess ought always to give place to the concerns of social and relative duty.

A scrupulous regard to health is, indeed, a duty incumbent on all; but, perhaps, more particularly to be attended to by the learned and ingenious, as they are of all the most subject to indisposition. A delicate frame is very often associated with a strong intellect; and a life of study, though a life of labour, is not adapted, like that of the manual labourer, to give elasticity to the nerves, or vigour to the animal functions. But excessive eating, added to excessive study, must wear the machine much

more than the substance of which it is constituted can long endure. If it is not soon broken in pieces, its wheels will be clogged, its springs broken, and the whole rendered useless and burthensome. It is recorded of Mr. Pope, that he was an immoderate eater, that he kept a silver saucepan to dress dainties for himself in the intervals of his meals, and that he died of a saucepan of lampreys.

Whatever part of the system of human affairs we examine, one truth appears to pervade the whole complicated mass, which is, that there can be neither wisdom, nor happiness, nor even enjoyment, of the subordinate kinds, independently of moderation. In the most refined and elevated part of our conduct and pursuits, the same truth is no less visible than in the lower occupations of common life. Sweet are the pleasures of contemplation, delightful the exercise of the mind in reading and reflection; but no pleasure, however pure, must be invariably pursued, till we are removed into the world of spirits, and are enabled to enjoy intellectual delights unalloyed and uninterrupted.

NO. CI.—ON THE PRESENT STATE OF CONVERSATION.

There is, perhaps, no method of improving the mind more efficacious, and certainly none more agreeable, than a mutual interchange of sentiments in an elegant and animated conversation with the judicious, the learned, and the communicative. Light and heat are elicited by the collision of minds. Truths which appeared dull in the solitude of the study are no sooner agitated in conversation, than they affect the mind with the liveliest sensibi-

lity. And it is one circumstance which, in a peculiar manner, recommends the mode of improvement by mutual discourse, that the social affections are no less powerfully exerted and exercised than the powers of reason. By the display of both, the heart and the understanding are at once improved.

Such would be the description of him who should derive his ideas on the subject from a chosen few, or from his books. But let him consider conversation as it really appears in the living world, independently of theoretical and speculative refinement, and I fear, that, instead of finding it always attended with improvement, it will often appear to him either very dull, or a fertile source of corruption and degeneracy.

A young man who has just left his school, full of the ideas which the poets, philosophers, and historians of antiquity supply, will probably bid adieu to many of them at the same time that he takes leave of his tutor; unless, indeed, his own choice should lead him to cultivate an acquaintance with them in private. Suppose him to pass from the school to a university. There, if he has spirit, he will of course seek the company, and imitate the manners, of those who possess a like spirit, and who are also celebrated as men of fashion. The conversation will, therefore, turn upon the subject of horses, dogs, drinking, dressing, debauchery, of cajoling the old gentleman at home out of his money, to be spent in these laudable purposes, or of running in debt with credulous and unfortunate tradesmen. Such will be the sublime contemplations and the philosophical topics of discourse among the young students in the famed academic groves on the banks of the Cam and the Isis, and in the schools of science and theology.

What, indeed, are the methods of passing time

among persons of the best repute and genteelest condition, while they think it indispensably necessary to move in the vortex of fashion? Nothing grave, nothing abstruse, nothing speculative. There is evidently an uneasiness, a silence, an awkwardness, a vacuity, till cards are introduced. It is not a harsh delineation of modern manners to assert, that in general, and even among those who certainly have a right to esteem, there appears to be no taste for any thing that deserves the name of refined and ingenious conversation. The time of a visit is for the most part spent in repeating the doubtful news of the day; in mere chat without consequence or connexion; in eating, drinking, and crowning the whole with a few rubbers. All this may be very innocent and pleasant as a relaxation; and the only point I maintain is, that the species of conversation from which improvement is to be derived is not often found in the present system of visiting and conversing.

I know not whether our youth, were he to seek the society of men in the professions, would be certain of finding that sort of converse from which philosophers inform us so much moral and intellectual improvement is received. If such be the case, we are not to wonder that it is rarely to be found in the common ranks, who are often too deficient in education to be able to interchange their sentiments with any considerable advantage to the mind or the morals.

It is said, that a celebrated wit had sought the company of Addison with uncommon solicitude, and with a hope of being delighted with that fine humour which is so conspicuous in his writings: but that Addison did not talk, though he paid it off in drinking, which he did so intemperately, that nature was obliged to throw off her load: upon which

circumstance, the visitor, on his departure, remarked, that no good thing had come out of his mouth that night but the wine. Let it, however, be remembered by those who bring such instances in their own justification, that the cause of Addison's taciturnity was a natural diffidence in the company of strangers, to dismiss which he took his glass more freely than he might otherwise have done; and that, among a chosen few, his conversation was at once improving and delightful.

In some circles it is possible to be a very excellent companion without uttering a single sentiment, or a single word more than is necessary to repeat the toast. In these, indeed, the wit of a Swift, the humour of a Quin, and the fine philosophical spirit of an Addison, would not be deemed half so agreeable as the good-natured ease of him who counts no hours, but silently sits, and inhales and exhales, through a tube of clay, the smoke of tabacco. If such persons are philosophers, one might guess from their taciturnity that they are the disciples of Pythagoras.

In the lower ranks of mankind we must not expect refinement. Liberal and ingenious ideas must have been collected by reading, before conversation can be advanced to the perfection of which it is capable. We readily, therefore, pardon those defects which could not easily have been supplied. We are not surprised at ribaldry, noise, and nonsense, in the society of the vulgar, and of those who seek relief from bodily labour in coarse mirth and unselected society. But that persons who have improved their reason, and who have leisure for all the refinements of intellectual pleasure, should neglect the means of so much advantage and satisfaction as might be derived from conversation properly conducted, is an additional instance of our folly in dis-

regarding the most obvious means of improving our happiness and our condition.

I know it may be said, that, as relaxation is often the principal object of our mutual intercourse, to render conversation a study, and the effect of care and meditation, is to defeat its purpose. But let it be remembered, that the improvements in conversation which I recommend contribute no less to increase the pleasure than the advantage of it. I recommend no stiffness, no improper solemnity, or disagreeable formality; but ease, elegance, politeness, united with sense, taste, learning, and with a communicative disposition. Cards are not disapproved in general; nothing, however light, while it is innocent, is totally prohibited; and all that I contend for is, that where circumstances admit, and in a proper alternation, literature, the fine arts, natural and moral philosophy, history, and whatever exercises the better powers of the understanding, should contribute to fill up the many hours which we usually spend in company. These things would often preclude insipidity, scandal, gaming, and intemperance. Such would be their valuable effects, considered only negatively. But they would do more: they would exalt and refine the human mind, and would prove, what man so often boasts, without exhibiting sufficient proofs of it, that he is an animal not only social, but rational.

NO. CII.—ON GOODNESS OF HEART.

Whoever has made accurate observations on men and manners, will easily perceive that the praise of goodness of heart is usually accompanied with an oblique insinuation of intellectual imbecility. I be-

lieve him to be a well-meaning man, says the malignant panegyrist, and if there is any fault in him, it will be found rather in his head than in his heart. Nothing could be better contrived by a crafty and envious world to render the amiable quality, good-nature, contemptible, than to represent it as the effect or as the companion of folly.

It is, indeed, true, that innocence and integrity are usually accompanied with simplicity; not, however, with that sort of simplicity which is sometimes synonymous with folly; but with a generosity and openness of heart, which had rather lose its objects than obtain them by deceit; which leads the tongue boldly to speak what the heart honestly conceives. If we weigh the satisfactions of an open and upright conduct, of a clear conscience, and of that liberty which we enjoy by thinking, speaking, and acting, without mean and servile restraints, it will, I believe, be found, that this simplicity is true wisdom, and that the cunning of the worldly wise is real and egregious imprudence.

Goodness of heart, whether it be a natural or acquired goodness, is indeed, in every respect, the highest excellence. It is the only quality which can rescue human nature from the disgrace and misery of its wretched weaknesses, and its powerful tendencies to evil. It raises the poor worm that otherwise crawls on a dunghill, and stings and bites his wretched companions, to an exalted place in the scale of being, and causes him to assimilate with the divine nature.

I shall exhibit to my youthful readers, whose hearts are yet susceptible of whatever bias they choose to give them, two characters; in one of which appeared goodness of heart, and in the other worldly wisdom or cunning, or the art of pleasing for the sake of profit. If any one should hesitate in

choosing whether of the two shall be his model, he need not hesitate at beginning a reformation of himself, for he may depend upon it, that his own heart stands greatly in need of amendment.

Serpens (for such let us suppose to be his name) has persuaded himself that he sees farther into things than the rest of his species. He considers religion as priestcraft, morality as the invention of politicians, and taste and literature as the amusement of fools. His philosophy, and all his better pursuits and ideas, are circumscribed within limits extremely narrow. Pleasure and interest are his chief good, his only objects of serious pursuit; and in the attainment of these he is not scrupulously delicate. There is, indeed, no virtue or good quality, the appearance of which he does not assume; because, while mankind are weak enough to judge and esteem men according to moral and religious prejudices, a plausible appearance is essentially necessary to success in life. External decency is his highest aim. Sincerity or sound principles would but retard his purposes. Compassion he never felt, and is equally a stranger to love and friendship, though he is always professing them to persons of fortune and distinction, whom he idolizes with religious adoration; and this is the only sentiment which he feels bordering upon religion.

By a life spent in abject servility, in courting a capricious world, in deceiving the credulous, in contriving schemes of advantage or pleasure, and in hardening his conscience, he has, at last, in his fiftieth year, obtained some promotion, and accumulated a handsome sum of money. But he cannot enjoy it, now he is possessed of it. The same greedy selfishness which taught him to debase his soul in pursuing interest and private gratification, still operates on his conduct, and renders him a

complete miser. Though he has long enjoyed a competency, he never had spirit enough to marry. He was afraid of the expense. He hates his relations, because he thinks they expect his fortune at his decease. He has made no real friends, though he has deceived thousands by professing friendship, for the easier accomplishment of his dirty designs. All the neighbours detest him; and he envies every one of them who appears to be happier than himself, which, indeed, they all do; for his heart is torn with malignity, with fears, anxieties, and covetousness. He bears, however, the character of a shrewd and sensible man; one who knows the world, and learned at an early age to make it his bubble. His advice is considered as an oracle in all pecuniary business; and no attorney would be half so much consulted, if he did not render himself almost inaccessible by the moroseness of his temper. As, in his youth, he was all submission and gentleness, and perfectly skilled in the celebrated art of pleasing; so now, when the mask is no longer necessary, his natural disposition breaks out in all its horrid deformity. But the misery which he occasions to all around him falls upon himself, by the just retribution of Providence. The heart which has been the receptacle of every vice and every meanness, is always the seat of uneasy sensation. The stupid insensibility with respect to the finer feelings, which usually characterizes that sort of shrewd men who are celebrated in the world as men who *know things so well*, may, indeed, guard them from pungent affliction; but it is itself a curse most devoutly to be deprecated.

Simplicius was the son of parents remarkable for the piety and regularity of their lives. He received a liberal education in its most comprehensive form, and found every moral instruction which he derived

from books, and from his preceptor, confirmed by example at home. All his delicate sensibilities were gradually nursed to a state of perfection by the innocence and temperance of his life; by the piety and virtue of his family, in which such respect was paid to him while a boy, that not a word that could convey a loose or improper idea was ever uttered in his presence. He married early, and obeyed the dictates of his heart in selecting a most amiable woman, of beauty, sense, and temper, but of little or no fortune. The shrewd and wise men of the world laughed and pitied. Simplicius, however, had never any reason to repent. His children are his chief delight; but he loves his friends with sincere and unalterable affection; and there is no species of distress which he does not pity and relieve to the best of his power. The amiableness of his manners, and the regularity of his conduct, gave him the advantage of character, the want of which can seldom be supplied by any worldly policy. With this powerful recommendation he has made his way to eminence, and enjoys his success with the truest relish. It is, indeed, unimbittered by any consciousness of sinister modes in securing it. He always proceeded in the straight road of common sense and honesty. He knew of no obliquities; for, indeed, he found the art of life very plain and easy, and by no means such as requires the precepts of a Chesterfield. His heart and his understanding are both excellent, and, co-operating with each other, have conducted him to happiness through the flowery paths of innocence. His own bosom has been a perpetual spring of agreeable sensations to himself, and to all who were so fortunate as to be allied to him by kindred, by affinity, by acquaintance, or in the course of his negociations. A good conscience will cause the evening of life to

close in the sweetest serenity, as the day has been distinguished by unclouded sunshine.

Whatever the short-sighted votaries of avarice and ambition may assert, there is no doubt but that real goodness of heart is the noblest ornament of human nature, and the least fallible source of permanent satisfaction. I have often therefore lamented, that, in the course of what is called a liberal education, very little attention has been paid at our best schools to the culture of the heart. While good seeds have been sown in the understanding, the heart has been suffered to be overrun with weeds and briars. In truth, learning and abilities, without goodness of heart, constitute that kind of wisdom which is foolishness in the sight of reason and of God. Without goodness of heart, man, however accomplished, is so far from being but a little lower than the angels, that he is scarcely above the accursed spirits, and by no means equal to many of the brutes, dogs in particular, who often exhibit most amiable instances of a good heart in the virtues of gratitude, sincere affection, and fidelity.

NO. CIII.—ON THE CHARACTERS OF THEOPHRASTUS.

If portraits of the ancient Athenians, painted from the life by the artists of the times, had descended to the present age, they would have attracted universal notice, and have been justly considered as invaluable. The productions, however, of the pencil are not proof against the corrosions of time; but though we have no original pictures of the persons of the ancient Athenians, we have admirable sketches of their minds delineated by Theophrastus. I do

not mean descriptions of heroes, philosophers, or poets. They are to be found in the writings of the historian. Theophrastus has taken his pictures from private and common life; from persons too obscure to adorn the page of history, but who constitute subjects well adapted to the purpose of him who studies the anatomy of human nature. It is, indeed, extremely curious and amusing to discover strokes of character in the citizens of Athens, who lived above two thousand years ago, exactly similar to the manners of the present day, as they appear in London, and in other parts of civilised Europe.

Theophrastus entered on the undertaking of delineating the characters of his countrymen at the age of ninety-nine; an age at which he had treasured up a multitude of ideas from converse and observation. His design was to stigmatize follies, foibles, and little vices, rather than atrocious crimes. He meant, as he informs us himself in his preface, that posterity should learn, from the patterns which he should leave them, to judge of characters with accurate discrimination, and to select such persons for friendship and acquaintance as might communicate excellence equal to their own, by exciting a spirit of generous emulation.

I will transcribe a single extract for the amusement of my reader, desiring him to bear in mind the idea, that the writer of the character, and the person characterized, lived above three hundred years before the Christian æra. It will also be proper, in order to receive all the pleasure which the perusal of Theophrastus is capable of affording, that the reader should consider whether many features of the character have not fallen under his own observation.

The following passage is taken from his section on the Art of Pleasing, and shows that this boasted

art, as it is now taught, is no modern discovery, but is at all times the genuine offspring of meanness and self-interest.

"The art of pleasing," says he, "is a kind of behaviour in the company of another, which tends, indeed, to give pleasure, but not for the best of purposes. The person who studies it is such a one as, after having saluted a man a great way off, and called him the best man in the world, and admired him sufficiently, takes him by both his hands, and will not let him go; but, accompanying him a little way, asks when he shall have the pleasure of seeing him again; nor does he take leave, after all, without a thousand compliments and praises. When he is called in as an arbitrator, he is not only desirous of pleasing the party on whose side he appears, but the adversary also, that he may seem to be the common friend of both. He tells a foreign gentleman that he really speaks the language with a better accent than the natives. When he is invited to dinner, he insists upon the gentleman's letting the little children come in; and the moment he sees them, he declares, they are more like their father than one fig is like another; and, taking them by the hand, he kisses them, and makes them sit next to him, and plays with them himself, saying, here is a little trinket for one, and here is a little hatchet for the other: and he lets them fall asleep on his lap, seeming to be highly delighted, though he sits on thorns all the while. He shaves his face very often; he keeps his teeth accurately clean; lays aside his clothes, even while they are good, because the fashion is changed, and takes care to be perfumed with the best perfume. In all public places he is seen talking, or sitting, with the principal persons, &c." It is not consistent with my design to fill my paper with citations, or it would

be easy to produce many ancient pieces from this moral painter which deserve to be highly esteemed on account of their age and curiosity. The paintings, it must be owned, are rather in the Flemish style, and many of them partake of the caricatura.

But though I commend the pieces as curiosities, I would by no means be understood to praise them as perfect, or as standards for imitation. Whether they have undergone mutilation or transposition, or whether the author, in extreme old age, had not spirits to review what he wrote, it is not easy to determine: but it is certain, that there is often a total want of connexion, and that many strokes are admitted not at all descriptive of the character to which they are applied. Indeed, it appears probable that the characters were real ones, and the remarks personal. So that, though the author began with a general foible or folly, yet, pursuing the model from which he drew in all its parts, he was led, by an accurate delineation of the whole, to some peculiarities not at all connected with the predominant features of the general character described.

With respect to the style of this little book, I cannot discover any beauties so peculiarly striking as could induce Aristotle to change the author's name from Tyrtamus to that of Theophrastus. There were, however, it is probable, in his other works, some very distinguished excellencies of diction, since they procured him, from one of the best critics whom the world ever saw, a name, which signified that he expressed himself like a god. Diogenes Laertius informs us, that he wrote no fewer than two hundred and twenty books; but scarcely any of them have escaped the hand of envious Time. The characters, we may venture to imagine, are greatly mutilated, and many of them

lost. It is, indeed, supposed, that as in this treatise he has represented faults only, he wrote another, in which he presented to the view the more amiable picture of virtuous and agreeable characters. Very high commendations are paid to his Treatise on Plants and Stones; but it is but little read, since the great improvements which have been made by the moderns in all sorts of science. Upon the whole of his character, Casaubon appears to have remarked, with justice, that he was worthy of that age which produced the glorious triumvirate, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.

Many commentaries have been written to facilitate the reading of the characters; but I cannot help thinking, that this is one of the few ancient books, in the illustration of which learning is less necessary than a knowledge of the world.

NO. CIV.—ON SEVERAL PASSAGES IN THE ENCHIRIDION OR MANUAL OF EPICTETUS.

There is scarcely any of the philosophical sects which has not adopted some absurdity amidst a great variety of wise and valuable doctrine. Like all inventors and selectors of their own systems, they have been hurried to excess, and have disgraced the rational parts of their philosophy by far-fetched refinements, or by foolish tenets, which could originate only in the madness of enthusiasm. The Stoical system, beautiful and noble as it is in a general view, abounds with blemishes which have almost rendered it contemptible. It may, indeed, be said, in vindication of them, that they have a tendency to raise and strengthen human nature,

while the errors of many other systems tend only to indulge its passions, and to increase its infirmity.

I shall present my reader with a few extracts from the admirable Enchiridion of Epictetus; divesting them of the absurd doctrines, and retaining only what is really practicable and interesting to mankind at large, independently of any philosophical system. The passages are well known to the learned, to whose notice it would be superfluous to address them. They are more particularly intended for the use of the young, and of those who, from their engagements in active or commercial life, have not time for the study of Epictetus. Readers of this description will, I hope, find them not only very curious, but useful specimens of heathen wisdom. I shall transcribe the few passages, which the limits of my paper will admit, from the translation of a lady, who has long done honour to her sex, and to English literature.

"Require not things to happen as you wish; but wish them to happen as they do happen, and you will go on well.

"Remember that you must behave in life as at an entertainment. Is any thing brought round to you? Put out your hand, and take your share with moderation. Does it pass by you? Do not stop it. Is it not yet come? Do not stretch forth your desire towards it, but wait till it reaches you. Thus do with regard to children, to a wife, to public posts, to riches; and you will be, some time or other, a worthy partner of the feasts of the gods.

"Remember that you are an actor in a drama, of such kind as the author pleases to make it. If short, of a short one; if long, of a long one. If it be his pleasure you should act a poor man, a cripple, a governor, or a private person, see that you act it na-

turally. For this is your business, to act well the character assigned you: to choose it is another's.

"If you have an earnest desire of attaining to philosophy, prepare yourself from the very first to be laughed at, to be sneered by the multitude, to hear them say, 'He is returned to us a philosopher all at once,' and, 'Whence this supercilious look?' Now, for your part, do not have a supercilious look indeed; but still keep steadily to those things which appear best to you, as one appointed by God to this station. For, remember, if you adhere to the same point, those very persons who at first ridiculed will afterwards admire you; but if you are conquered by them, you will incur a double ridicule.

"When a neighbour's boy has had a slight accident, broken a cup for instance, we are presently ready to say, 'These are things that will happen.' Be assured, then, that when your own cup likewise is broken, you ought to be affected just as when another's cup is broken. Transfer this in like manner to other things. Is the child or wife of another dead? There is not one who would not say, 'This is an accident to which human nature is liable.' But if any one's own child happens to die, it is presently, 'Alas, how wretched am I!' But it should be remembered, how we are affected on hearing the same thing concerning others.

"If a person had delivered up your body to any one whom he had met in the way, you would certainly be angry. And do you feel no shame in delivering up your own mind to be disconcerted and confounded by any one who happens to give you ill language?

"Duties are universally measured by relations. Is any one a father? In this are implied, as due, taking care of him, submitting to him in all things,

patiently receiving his reproaches, his correction. But he is a bad father. Is your natural tie, then, to a good father? No: but to a father. Is a brother unjust? Well, preserve your own situation towards him: consider not what he does, but what you are to do. In this manner you will find, from the idea of a neighbour, a citizen, a general, the corresponding duties, if you accustom yourselves to contemplate the several relations.

"It is incumbent on every one to offer libations and sacrifices, conformably to the customs of his country, with purity, and not in a slovenly manner, nor negligently, nor beyond his ability.

"Immediately prescribe some character and form of behaviour to yourself, which you may preserve, both alone and in company.

"We must not discourse on any of the common subjects of gladiators, or horse-races, or athletic champions, or feasts, the vulgar topics of conversation; but principally not of men, so as either to blame or praise, or make comparisons. If you are able, by your own conversation, bring over that of your company to proper subjects; but, if you happen to be taken among persons of ideas totally different from yours, be silent.

"Let not your laughter be much, nor on many occasions, nor profuse. Avoid swearing, if possible, altogether; if not, as far as you are able.

"Avoid public and vulgar entertainments; but, if ever an occasion calls you to them, keep your attention upon the stretch, that you may not imperceptibly slide into vulgar manners. For be assured, that, if a person be ever so sound himself, yet if his companion be infected, he who converses with him will be infected likewise.

"Before marriage preserve yourself pure; but do

not, therefore, be troublesome, and full of reproofs to those who are licentious, nor frequently boast that you yourself are not.

"If any person tells you, that such a person speaks ill of you, do not make excuses about what is said of you, but answer; 'He does not know my other faults, else he would not have mentioned only these.'

"In parties of conversation, avoid a frequent and excessive mention of your own actions and dangers; for, however agreeable it may be to yourself to mention the risques you have run, it is not equally agreeable to others to hear your adventures. Avoid likewise an endeavour to excite laughter; for this is a slippery point, which may throw you into vulgar manners; and besides, may be apt to lessen you in the esteem of your acquaintance. Approaches to indecent discourse are likewise dangerous. Whenever, therefore, any thing of this sort happens, if there be a proper opportunity, rebuke him who makes advances that way; or, at least by silence and blushing, and a forbidding look, show yourself displeased by such talk.

"If you are struck by the appearance of any promised pleasure, guard yourself against being hurried away by it; but let the affair wait your leisure, and procure yourself some delay. Then bring to your mind both points of time; that in which you shall enjoy the pleasure, and that in which you will repent and reproach yourself, after you have enjoyed it: and set before you, in opposition to these, how you will rejoice and applaud yourself, if you abstain. And even though it should appear to you a seasonable gratification, take heed that its enticing, and agreeable, and attractive force may not subdue you; but set in opposition to this, how much better it is to be conscious of having gained so great a victory.

"When you do any thing from a clear judgement that it ought to be done, never shun the being seen to do it, even though the world should make a wrong supposition about it; for, if you do not act right, shun the action itself; but if you do, why are you afraid of those who censure you wrongly?

"If you have assumed any character above your strength, you have both made an ill figure in that, and quitted one which you might have supported.

"Women, from fourteen years old, are flattered by the title of mistress by the men; therefore, perceiving that they are regarded as only qualified to give the men pleasure, they begin to adorn themselves, and in that to place all their hopes. It is worth while, therefore, to fix our attention on making them sensible that they are esteemed for nothing else but the appearance of a decent, and modest, and discreet behaviour.

"It is a mark of want of genius to spend much time in things relating to the body; as to be long in our exercises, in eating and drinking. These should be done incidentally and slightly, and our whole attention be engaged in the care of the understanding.

"Never call yourself a philosopher, nor talk a great deal among the unlearned about theorems; but act conformably to them. Thus, at entertainments, do not talk how persons ought to eat; but eat as you ought. There is great danger in immediately throwing out what you have not digested. And if any one tells you, that you know nothing, and you are not nettled at it, then you may be sure that you have begun your business.

"Sheep do not produce the grass, to show how much they have eaten; but inwardly digesting their food, they outwardly produce wool and milk. Thus,

therefore, do you likewise not show theorems to the unlearned, but the actions produced by them, after they have been digested.

"The condition and characteristic of a vulgar person are, that he never expects either benefit or hurt from himself, but from externals. The condition and characteristic of a philosopher are, that he expects all hurt and benefit from himself.

"Whatever rules you have deliberately proposed to yourself for the conduct of life, abide by them as so many laws, and as if you would be guilty of impiety in transgressing any of them; and do not regard what any one says of you, for this, after all, is no concern of yours. How long will you defer to think yourself worthy of the noblest improvements, and in no instance to transgress the distinctions of reason? You are no longer a boy, but a grown man. If therefore, you will be negligent and slothful, and always add procrastination to procrastination, purpose to purpose, and fix day after day in which you will attend to yourself, you will insensibly continue without proficiency; and living and dying, persevere in being one of the vulgar. This instant, then, think yourself worthy of living as a man grown up, and a proficient. Let whatever appears to be the best, be to you an inviolable law. And if any instance of pain or pleasure, or glory or disgrace, be set before you, remember that now is the combat, now the Olympiad comes on, nor can it be put off; and that, by once being worsted, and giving way, proficiency is lost; or, by the contrary, preserved. Thus Socrates became perfect, improving himself by every thing, attending to nothing but reason. And, though you are not yet a Socrates, you ought, however, to live as one desirous of becoming a Socrates.

"Upon all occasions we ought to have this say-

ing of Socrates at hand: 'O Crito! if it thus pleases the gods, thus let it be! Anytus and Melitus may kill me indeed, but hurt me they cannot.'"

The conferences of Epictetus, from which, indeed, the Manual is in great measure collected, quaint as they appear, abound with pithy remarks, such as suggest much more to the mind of a reflecting reader than meets the ear. The gold, however, as it happens in the richest mines, is surrounded with much dross. The uncouth manner in which the conferences appear in a translation, however excellent, has deterred many from perusing them who would have found their perseverance amply rewarded. I cannot, therefore, help wishing, for the sake of liberal and studious young men, that all the valuable matter were extracted, and presented to their view, with accuracy; but, at the same time, with all the ornaments of an elegant and flowing diction. I should, indeed, think it an excellent mode of improving the minds and morals of those who are in the course of their education, if some one passage, like those cited above, were selected as a text or subject on which the preceptor might expatiate. For, next to the Scriptures themselves, the writings of the Stoics contribute most to raise and rescue human nature from the humiliation and wretchedness into which it is prone to fall by natural degeneracy, inherent weakness, and acquired corruption. They operate on the mind like those medicines on the body which are called bracers, or corroboratives; and surely that philosophy ought to be encouraged by every moralist and statesman which adds nerves to virtue, and gives stability to empire.

NO. CV.—ON SWEETNESS AND DELICACY OF STYLE.

As there is in some flowers an exquisite scent, and in some fruits a delicious flavour, to express which no language has a name; so there is in style a sweetness and a delicacy which eludes description, and can only be perceived by the sensibility of taste.

But though it may be difficult to analyse this agreeable quality, or to teach a writer how to infuse it into his works, yet it is by no means equally arduous to point out a few authors in whom both the observations of others, and our own feelings, have discovered it. This, indeed, is the only method of communicating it: and though it is not to be taught by didactic and formal precepts, it may be acquired by the contagious influence of a captivating example.

Sweetness is chiefly to be found in lyric poetry, but it is by no means confined to it. Though Vossius is of opinion that sweetness is peculiar to lyric, as gravity to the epic, simplicity to the pastoral, softness to the elegiac, jocularity to the comic, pathos to the tragic, bitterness to the satiric, and pungency to the epigrammatic; yet I rather think that they all admit, on some occasions, something of this captivating quality. Homer, who furnishes models of every style, often mixes, among his ruder beauties, a delicate sweetness of diction, which, besides its own inherent power of pleasing, embellishes all the rougher parts by the power of contrast.

Theocritus is all sweetness; and if a reader, with a good ear, should not understand the bard of Syracuse, he might still be delighted with the delicious honey of the Doric dialect.

Many of the little but elegant compositions in the

Anthologiæ owe all their excellence to the selection of words which convey enchanting music to the ear. They seem, indeed, to trickle like liquid honey from the honeycomb, and this without any affectation in the writers; for such are the peculiar beauties of the Greek language, that it is difficult to write on subjects connected with pleasure, love, and beauty, without using such expressions as, besides their real meaning, excite an idea of sweetness, by their sound, similar in its melody to the object represented

Sweetness is the peculiar excellence of the joyous bard of Teos. The bacchanalian songs of modern times partake very little of those delicate charms which distinguish a style truly Anacreontic. It does not indeed appear, that the modern bacchanals have thought it possible that their joys should admit of delicacy. The songs, therefore, which have been written to enliven and stimulate their mirth have usually been of a coarser kind, and such as necessarily excluded sweetness of composition. They seem to have considered a Bacchus as he is rudely represented on a sign-post, and not, as he is described by the poets and sculptors of antiquity, a most graceful and elegant figure. Anacreon, after all, like the Greek epigrammatists, must be acknowledged to owe much of his sweetness to a language which cannot be otherwise than sweet on certain subjects, without unnatural violence. The Latin language, though susceptible of peculiar delicacy, is certainly less capable of sweetness than the dialect of Athens, Ionia, and Doris. But still there are many authors in it who have derived much of the power of pleasing the human race, during near twenty centuries, from the singular sweetness of their style.

Catullus, I believe, deserves to be mentioned among the first of those who have emulated the Greeks in their distinguished excellence. Few books would

have been better calculated to give boys a true taste for sweet composition, if the decency of the poet's sentiments had been equal to the delicacy of his style. But it must be allowed that his honey has a poisonous quality.

Horace was a very Proteus in the circumstance of a versatile and variegated diction. His Odes abound with stanzas, and his other works with heroic verses, which evidently prove, that, if he had chosen to vie with Virgil in strength and dignity, he would have approached his rival. But he was a man of pleasure; and his favourite style is that in which he celebrates love and wine. In this there is a remarkable sweetness; and I know not whether the *curiosa felicitas*, or that charm of his writings which resulted from study and happiness united, may not be said to consist in delicacy of sentiment and suavity of expression. So delightful are the ninth ode of the fourth book, and the fourth of the third, that all readers have been charmed with them; and Julius Scaliger, a very warm critic, has asserted, that he had rather be the author of them than of all Pindar's odes, or than be elevated to the rank of a monarch. It is, I think, certain, that many of the odes of Horace, and many of the works of other poets of equal fame, have delighted mankind, from one generation to another, far less by the justness of the sentiments than by a sweetness of language, a delicate choice of words, and a well-modulated collocation.

The modest bard of Mantua indisputably owes his influence over the human mind to his talent in attempering, in a most judicious union, softness, sweetness, and the nicest delicacy, with the most majestic grandeur, the dignity of heroic language and virtue.

Among the prose writers of Greece and Rome, every reader of taste will immediately observe, that Herodotus and Xenophon, Cæsar and Cicero, claim

the first place in the excellence of a sweet style. The two Plinies and Paterculus have a considerable share of it. Thucydides, Sallust, and Tacitus, are too fond of austerity to admit any great portion of sweetness; yet they admit it occasionally.

Many of the modern Latin poets have distinguished themselves by the sweetness of their verse. Some of them have, however, carried it to excess, and have written in the worst manner of Grotius, Johannes Secundus, and Bonifonius. Sweetness ought to be distinguished from lusciousness: the one affects us with the sensations durably agreeable; the other quickly cloys and palls the appetite.

The eminent French writers, who certainly possess taste, have displayed a remarkable sweetness of style. The Italians can scarcely compose without displaying it. He who has formed a taste for this quality will find it fully gratified in the writings of Fontaine, Metastasio, and indeed in all the celebrated authors of France and Italy. Those nations, in modern times, have been more defective in strength and nerve than in any of the softer qualities, the purpose of which is to please, allure, and seduce.

Though the French are disposed to deny the English the praise of taste, I cannot help thinking, that we have writers who can rival them in their pretensions to taste and to every excellence which can adorn composition. Our Addison, like some of the most celebrated ancients, possesses that sweetness, that delicacy, and that grace, which is formed to please the human mind, under all the revolutions of time, of fashion, and of capricious taste. It is not only the excellent matter which produces the effect of gently composing our passions while we are reading Addison, but it is also that sweet style, which cannot be read and tasted without communicating to the mind something of its own delightful equability.

Sir William Temple was, indeed, the model of Addison, and he is remarkable for the sweetness of his style, especially if he is compared with the writers of his own time.

All our eminent poets have judiciously mingled sweetness with strength, and grace with dignity. Waller has usually obtained the praise of sweetness; but he has been greatly exceeded by his successors in this and every other species of poetry. If that sort of genius which constitutes a Homer, a Shakespeare, a Milton, has not been common among us, yet the subordinate species which is displayed in elegant mediocrity, and what we call pretty and pleasing opuscula, has no where more abounded; and suavity has been one of the excellencies principally pursued, and most easily attained.

It appears to me, that the later writers of prose have rather affected the masculine and nervous than the sweet and graceful. The author of Fitzosborne's Letters has exhibited both grace and sweetness: and I wish they were not sometimes injured by verbosity. Johnson, Hawkesworth, Robertson, are chiefly admired for strength and force. Hume has now and then displayed something of Addisonian sweetness in a few of his moral essays, together with Addison's gentleness. It is to be wished he had displayed something of the Addisonian goodness of heart; but it must be allowed, that his flowers have often a poisonous quality. The Warburtonian school, as Hume called it, though it has produced ingenious and nervous writers, cannot boast either of sweetness or grace. It has delighted much in violent controversy and arbitrary dictation, both of which usually bid defiance to the Graces, and prefer bitterness and acrimony to sweetness of style and melody of diction.

Though it may not be easy to define the whole of

that, whatever it is, which constitutes sweetness of style, yet it is by no means difficult to discover one or two circumstances which are highly conducive to it. It is, indeed, obvious to observe, that the frequent use of liquid letters, and of labials combined with syllables consisting of vowels with few consonants, contributes greatly to sweeten the diction. But so nice a point is real excellence, that the smallest excess or affectation of any particular beauty will totally destroy all its agreeable effect. It must result from nature, cultivated indeed, but not too closely confined and directed by art. Alliteration is conducive to sweetness, and is a figure frequently used by the best writers, ancient and modern. Used with caution, it cannot fail to please; but the cause of the pleasure should be latent. When this figure obtrudes itself too often, and in excess, as it does in several modern writers, it loses all its grace; and the reader resents and loathes the paltry artifice of a writer who depends on so poor a claim to applause. This, indeed, and all other ornaments, are to be used, as it has been observed, like salt at a meal, which agreeably seasons every dish when mixed in moderation, but which would spoil the whole, if it were rendered the predominant ingredient of the repast.

NO. CVI.—HINTS TO THOSE WHO ARE DESIGNED FOR THE PROFESSION OF PHYSIC.

It was always a part of my design, in these papers, to suggest a few hints of advice to young persons who are just entering on any of the liberal professions; not, indeed, with a presumptuous intention of directing them in a technical or scientific prac-

tice, but merely to give them some general ideas which may render their views more liberal, and their minds more generous, or arm them with some useful precautions. I remember too well the impertinence of the sophist, who read a lecture to Hannibal on the art of war, to think of instructing any persons in the peculiar art and science which they have made the study of their lives. But there are certain universal truths which men attached to a particular pursuit sometimes overlook. There is also a certain enlargement of mind, which is lost in the narrow habits and confined views of those who take an active part in a profession as a source of lucre. He who surveys life in an extensive prospect, may see a variety of magnificent objects which escape the eye, that is constantly fixed on a few single circumstances, and confined within a narrow circle. It is the business of the moralist to inspect every part of human transactions, to endeavour to correct the errors of them, and promote all the excellence and happiness of which each profession is capable.

It has been justly remarked, that they who enter on the profession of medicine in any of its branches, have too often depended for success rather on the cultivation of the *graces* than the sciences. And it is certain, that many persons whose solid attainments were very moderate have run away with the greatest share of wealth and popularity, with few other recommendations than a fine person, a showy dress, a singular equipage, and an undaunted effrontery.

But since internal satisfaction, a consciousness of having done all that was possible to prepare for a profession very important to mankind, and of having pretended to no more than we are able to perform, is a surer source of happiness than the applause,

and even the guineas, of the ignorant multitude, I advise every pupil, who values substantial happiness more than the phantom of it, to devote the first period of his life to a very serious pursuit of every part of knowledge which contributes to give him not only a practical but a theoretical skill in his profession; not only the contracted ideas of a mercenary practitioner, but the comprehensive sentiments of a student in philosophy.

The foundation of medical excellence should be laid in an education truly liberal. It is really lamentable to observe the extreme ignorance of those among medical practitioners who are applied to in the first instance, and who constitute the most numerous class. They are taken from a writing-school, or perhaps a grammar-school, at the age of fourteen, and bound apprentices. They have usually acquired a good hand-writing; but their knowledge of the classics and languages is seldom worth mentioning; and upon the whole, their education may be said to be about equal to that of a pauper in a parish charity-school. Their business is to stand behind a counter, and compound medicines according to the prescriptions of the doctor. These are usually in Latin, written very illegibly, and full of affected abbreviations. They are, indeed, often so ænigmatical, that nothing less than the sagacity of an Œdipus can resolve their difficulties. The poor lad, if he has time, will toil at his dictionary, where, however, he often toils in vain; but if he has not time, which is usually the case, he takes the most expeditious method of doing business. He is ashamed to confess his ignorance, and therefore puts up any medicine which his *conjecture* suggests: the phial is wrapt in its paper, adorned with a label *secundum artem*, despatched with all expedition, and the patient poisoned.

After having spent seven years in a shop, pounding drugs and spreading plasters, and after having acquired a little paltry portion of mechanical knowledge by constant habit, the medical student is dismissed as complete; and goes into the country a bold professor of chirurgery and pharmacy. With a smart dress, an unblushing countenance, and a voluble tongue, he is sure of success, and bids defiance to all the learning in the world. In his own opinion, he is another Hippocrates or Heberden: and, indeed, he is an object of real wonder to the country people; for he collects a few hard words from his dictionary, which he utters with great gravity among gossips and farmers, who consider him as a very learned man, as well as prodigiously clever in his profession. Those who could bear witness against his skill are all secured and silenced in the church-yard.

I assert, that a competent knowledge of Greek as well as Latin is really necessary to the apothecary, if he would perform his business with that accuracy which is certainly required in so important an employment. Apothecaries are the physicians of more than half the nation. A boy destined to this employment should by no means leave his school till the age of sixteen or seventeen. The knowledge of the learned languages acquired before that time is merely elementary: it is only of use as it leads to farther improvement. It cannot qualify for any profession, much less for the apothecary's; the names of whose instruments, medicines, and operations, are, for the most part, either wholly Greek, or of Greek extraction. Scarcely any of the terms which he is obliged to use, can be understood by him without a knowledge of the Greek language.

But, indeed, if he wishes to raise his profession

above the level of an empiric or a farrier, he should acquire a liberal education for its own sake, independently of its use in a mercenary view; for the sake of polishing his mind, and elevating his sentiments. With a liberal education and an extensive practice, he is in fact a physician, though called an apothecary; and though he should neither have purchased a diploma, nor have earned a regular degree by spending his time and money in an English university, he is a medical Professor, though not an academical Doctor: and the peculiar utility of his employments, when judiciously and humanely conducted, entitles him to the company and conversation of gentlemen and the esteem of every body.

There never was an age in which they who intend to support the dignified character of graduated physicians had better opportunities for improvement in physiology. Lectures, as well as books, in anatomy, chemistry, and every part of science and natural philosophy, never more abounded. Let the future apothecary or physician devote himself to these with long and serious application, and depend more upon them than on the caprice of fashion, or any singularity in his chariot or livery. A popular physician or skilful apothecary in a great capital, and indeed any where, is a very important member of society, considered merely in a political view. The lives, limbs, health, and spirits, of a very great part of the subjects of a kingdom may depend upon his skill and honesty. A man who undertakes this office, and recommends himself by address and artifice, without furnishing his mind with every preparatory knowledge, and who abuses the confidence of those who fly to him, as to a guardian angel, in the deepest distress, has very little claim to the title of an honest man, but deserves to be stigmatized

and punished with the worst of villains, and vilest of sharpers. What is a little property compared to health and life?

It has been observed and regretted, that some individuals in this liberal profession have exhibited such an attention to interest as is incompatible with the common feelings of humanity. Such persons are their own enemies; for no gratifications of sordid avarice can equal the delicious sensations of him who delights in exercising his skill, in diffusing joy through the haunts of misery, and in relieving the sick, the maimed, the halt, and the blind. The profession, when humanely, generously, and skilfully practised, is truly godlike. Every one, it is true, ought to pay that regard to interest which prudence and a love of his own family demand; but he who also delights in relieving, from the satisfaction of sympathy and a sense of duty, may be said to resemble the great model of every perfection, JESUS CHRIST, who went about doing good, and healing all manner of sickness and diseases among the people.

NO. CVII.—THE COMPLAINTS AGAINST MODERN LITERATURE PROBABLY ILL-FOUNDED.

To complain of the present, and to praise the past, has so long been the favourite topic of disappointment or of ignorance, that every stricture on the degeneracy of the times is looked upon as the effusion of ill-nature, or the result of superficial observation: but the absurdity of declamatory invective ought not to preclude the cool remarks of truth, reason, and experience.

The practice of vice or virtue has indeed varied, at different periods, rather in the mode than in the de-

gree; but the state of literature has suffered more violent revolutions: it has sometimes shone with the brightest lustre; and at others has been totally overshadowed with the darkness of barbarism.

To review the state of learning from the earliest periods, and to investigate the causes of its fluctuation, is a task that requires much labour, sagacity, and erudition. More superficial inquiries will, however, suffice to examine the justice of the charge of literary degeneracy in the present age, and, if it be well founded, to discover the causes of it.

It has been observed by an ingenious writer, that as every age has been marked by some peculiarity from which it has derived its characteristic appellation, so the present, were it to be distinguished by a name from its most prevalent humour, might be called *the age of authors*. Of late years, almost every man has felt an ambition of appearing in print, from the voluminous lexicographer down to the scribbler in a pamphlet or a newspaper. It is, indeed, natural to suppose, that, of a great number of competitors, some would reach the prize; and that the universal combination of intellects would effect some stupendous work, which should exceed all the productions of our predecessors, and demand the admiration of the latest posterity. It has, however, been observed, that the learning of the present age is not deep, though diffusive; and that its productions are not excellent, though numerous.

A multiplicity of compositions is an argument of their hasty production; and hastiness is at least a presumptive proof of their want of merit. In this point, the literary and the natural world resemble each other. The productions of nature, whether vegetable or animal, as they are either of a slow or speedy growth, are known to be durable or transitory, solid or unsubstantial. The oak and the ele-

phant are long before they attain perfection, but are still longer before they decay; while the butterfly and the tulip perish as they arise, almost within the sun's diurnal revolution. The works of Virgil cost him much time and labour; but they have existed near two thousand years universally admired; while the compositions of that poet mentioned by Horace, who boasted he could write two or three hundred verses while he stood on one leg, were lost in a space almost as short as that in which they were produced.

But the hasty formation of literary works in modern times is not a greater obstacle to their excellence than the mercenary motives of their authors. The office of instructing mankind in morality, and of informing them in science, was once reserved for those alone who were particularly adapted to the task by the impulses of genius, by peculiar opportunities, and by singular application. In these times, however, the profession of an author is become a lucrative employment, and is practised rather by those who feel the inconvenience of hunger than by those who are stimulated with the hope of immortality. But it is a known truth, that the pursuit of money alone contracts the mind, and renders it incapable of elevated sentiments and generous enterprises. It ceases, therefore, to be matter of wonder, that works are destitute of spirit when they proceed not from the noble ardour inspired by the love of fame, but from the frigid incitements of avarice.

The depraved taste of readers is another cause of the degeneracy of writers. They who write for the public must gratify the taste of the public. In vain are their compositions formed on the model of the best writers, and regulated by the precepts of the most judicious critics, if they conform not to the

popular caprice and the mistaken judgement of the vulgar. In an age when the taste for reading is universal, many works, contemptible both in design and execution, will be received by some readers with distinguished applause. The want of the merits of just reasoning and pure language is, with the greater part, the half-learned and the ignorant, no objection. The vilest trash of a circulating library, if it abounds with personal abuse, finds its admirers. In truth, unconnected thoughts and superficial declamation are congenial to minds unaccustomed to accurate thinking, and insensible of the charms of finished excellence. Hence, writers of acknowledged abilities and learning have been known, when they aimed at popularity, to relinquish real excellence, and adopt a false taste in opposition to their own judgement; but it is a most disgraceful condescension.

After all, it may not perhaps be absurd to attribute many of the complaints against the present state of letters to ignorance, envy, and caprice. In every department of literature, in the gay regions of fancy, and in the depths of philosophy and science, many authors there are of this age and nation who have acquired an illustrious reputation by deserving it: and if they want that originality of thought and solidity of learning which mark some of the productions of our first writers, who had the advantage of coming first to the harvest, yet have they a force, elegance, and correctness of style, unknown to most of their predecessors.

NO. CVIII.—ON THE CAUSES AND FOLLY OF DISSENSIONS IN A COUNTRY NEIGHBOURHOOD.

It seems extraordinary that, with all our pretensions to the social affections and to Christianity, there are few country towns or villages in which the families, which are reckoned genteel by the right of fortune and of self-estimation, live upon terms of cordial and sincere friendship. One might, I believe, venture to go farther, and to assert, that there are few where a general enmity and dislike do not lurk under the formality of ceremonious visits and civil salutation. The petty passions repel all social endearments of cordial familiarity.

The foundation of all neighbourly animosity is a foolish pride, which, though it was not made for so weak a creature as man, yet adheres so closely to him, that he can seldom divest himself of it, without such an effort as few minds are able to make. Philosophy is vainly applied; for few are prouder than philosophers, and common minds are not capable of any philosophy. Religion only can effectually eradicate a vice so deeply rooted; that amiable religion which teaches us to love our neighbours as ourselves; and which has informed us of a truth, which experience abundantly confirms, that from *pride cometh contention.*

The most trifling distinction or appearance of superiority in a neighbourhood, is sure to excite all the heart-burnings of secret envy and jealousy. Instead of rejoicing at any fortunate event which contributes to the happiness of a neighbour, the greater part secretly repine at it, and endeavour to lessen the satisfaction it might afford, by disseminating some mortifying surmise or insinuation. Indeed, the fortunate person sometimes deserves some hu-

miliation; for as his neighbours are endeavouring to lower him to their own level, he, on the other hand, ostentatiously displays his superiority, and labours to depress them below their due rank, that his own elevation may be more conspicuous. It would be entertaining to behold the little contrivances which the petty gentry invent for the purpose of eclipsing each other, if there were not always something of a malignity which disgusts and hurts the mind of a humane man. The rivalry of rural neighbourhood is by no means of an amicable sort; and though the parties are wonderfully civil when they meet, they often hate each other with the greatest inveteracy. Nothing would, indeed, give them greater pleasure than to hear of each other's losses or ruin, though they would not fail to visit on the occasion, and to sympathize in the politest and most improved fashion. Envy overcomes all the duties of social life and Christian benevolence.

Scandal, indeed, who has long reigned with arbitrary sway in country towns, is usually the cause of all that latent hatred which poisons the happiness of families whose birth or fortune has placed them in the same neighbourhood; and who, enjoying plenty, might also enjoy peace, if they could prevail upon themselves to turn a deaf ear to the talebearer. But such is the perverseness or malignity of many, that though they have themselves but just suffered from the false reports of slanderers, they listen with delight to the next whisper, that flies, like the arrow in the dark, and wounds a neighbour's reputation. If any favourable report begin to prevail, it is with difficulty admitted; it is doubted, contradicted, or extenuated. But there is no malignant and mischievous lie so improbably false, so little like the truth, but it will be joyfully received and believed without examination, so long as it

tends to lower an object of envy in the esteem of a neighbourhood, to injure the interest of a rival, or to wound the heart of him whom we hate, only because we feel the weight of his superiority.

It is to be wished, that people would consider from how contemptible a source most of those calumnies originate which induce neighbours to entertain a bad opinion of each other, and, in consequence, to live in a state of constant though secret enmity. They usually come from domestic servants, who, in revenge for a just reprimand, or from the wickedness of an ungrateful heart, delight in disseminating the most cruel tales without the least foundation in truth or reality. Or, supposing something similar to the calumny did happen in a neighbour's house, it is so disguised, altered, and exaggerated, by the time it has gone from the top of a town to the bottom, that what was in truth no more than a trifle scarcely worth attention, becomes a charge of a most atrocious and injurious kind, when it has been tossed from tongue to tongue, and magnified by the passions and the imagination. The vilest menial shall utter a lie in the meanest shop of the most paltry town; and, in the space of half an hour, it shall be republished with additions and embellishments, as a known fact, by the Lady of the Manor.

The petty offices and distinctions of churchwardens, surveyors, mayors, commissioners of turnpike-roads, and similar rural dignities, do indeed often fill their possessors, and their ladies, with so high a sense of their own importance, and at the same time excite so much envy in the little minds which aspire at such honours, that, in proportion as the great personage advances in the path of glory, he is often obliged to relinquish the comforts of good neighbourhood. It is not, indeed, to be wondered at, if

those who have had little or no education, and whose views have been confined to horses, dogs, and the affairs of a vestry and a court-leet, should value themselves too much on petty distinction, and should suppose the title of esquire, the offices of justice of peace or churchwarden, such honours as may justify them in treating others with contumely. Neither is it wonderful, that they who have never wandered beyond the limits of their native parish should survey such distinctions with an envious eye. All men ought, indeed, to aspire at distinction, as it may lead them to aspire at usefulness and virtue; but it is certainly desirable, for the sake of tranquillity, that envy and malice should not be mixed with the laudable emulation of rural aspirants at office and authority.

But there are other causes besides the love of scandal and the gratification of vanity which powerfully operate in interrupting the harmony of a good neighbourhood. Avarice is the occasion of many and indeterminable disagreements. In what part of the country can we fix our residence where some of the clergy are not objects of dislike, because a regard to their wives and children, whose bread depends upon their lives, induces them to insist on those dues which the laws have allowed them? The clergyman in the most desert part of the country is usually a man of learning (more learning at least than his parishioners), and of a polite mind, who might diffuse a taste for elegant and improving conversation; but he is often excluded from the society of his esquires because he makes a just claim upon their property. The most shocking calumnies are propagated against him and his family, because he takes his tithes in kind; every thing is done which can mortify and distress him; and he is frequently involved for life by the farmers, and a pettifogger

at their head, in vexatious and expensive litigation. He who preaches peace, and who might soften, by the influence of polished manners, the remains of brutality among his savage and narrow-minded neighbours, is hunted by them till he is forced to take refuge in the lonely retreat of his library.

The various meetings which are necessary to conduct parish and other public business in the country are often productive of violent animosities. An opposition formed at a vestry, or a turnpike-meeting, is sometimes carried on with more acrimony than in the House of Commons. It would not be so lamentable, if the consequences of the dispute terminated at the time and place in which it arose; but it usually happens that, if the gentlemen have disagreed in the vestry, the ladies, at the next tea-drinking, put on sullen looks, and commence a secret attack on each other's persons, dress, character, and conduct. Hostilities which owe their rise to a difference of opinion concerning the mending of a road, the appropriation of a pew, or the repairing of a steeple, are carried on under the cover of external civility, and continue from generation to generation.

It would be a very valuable point gained, if we could prevail on the many thousands, who, with all the external means of happiness, lead uncomfortable lives in the country from the dissensions of their neighbourhood, to consider duly the importance of a friendly intercourse with those in whose vicinity they have been placed by Providence. They may be confidently assured, that no pleasure arising from scandal, from petty distinctions, from trifling matters of interest, or from influence over parish or county meetings, can be compared to the satisfaction of living in love, and in a constant interchange of those good offices which alleviate adversity, and

give to prosperity its sweetest enjoyments. The qualities indispensably necessary to promote and preserve peace and good-will in a neighbourhood, are Christian benevolence and Christian humility. Religion must interpose to cure the evils of worldly pride and passions.

NO. CIX.—THE IMPRUDENCE OF AN EARLY ATTACHMENT TO ACTING PLAYS. [IN A LETTER.]

As I was sauntering a few days ago on one of the public walks, I could not help particularly remarking a young man, whose dress showed marks of a shabby gentility, and whose countenance wore the aspect of a settled melancholy.

The appearance of wretchedness, in whatever situation, is always sufficient to awaken my curiosity. I felt myself irresistibly impelled to inquire into the history of a person who seemed to be completely miserable. After having walked a considerable time, I saw him throw himself, in a disconsolate attitude, on one of the seats of the walk. I did not neglect the opportunity; but, seating myself by his side, prevailed on him, after some introductory conversation, to give me his history, which he did in the following words*:

"Yes, Sir," said he, "though my present appearance may seem to invalidate my assertion, I assure you I was the son of one of the most opulent traders in the metropolis. I might, at this time, have been enjoying all the happiness that affluence can bestow; but now, alas! I have no where to lay my head, no refuge to which I can fly for comfort. I am abandoned to the wide world without a friend;

* This account is founded on fact.

and one consideration aggravates all my misery—I have deserved my sufferings, and cannot justly complain."

Here he paused to conceal a tear which was just bursting from his eyes. After he had a little recovered himself, his countenance gradually grew more serene, and he proceeded with less emotion.

"When I was at the age of eleven, my father placed me at a celebrated grammar-school: there I spent the happiest days of my life. Nature, as I was told, had given me parts. I made a rapid progress in classical learning: all was encouragement, all was hope, and all was happiness. But, in the midst of my improvement, my father resolved, in opposition to the advice of my master, to remove me from school, and to settle me in his own counting-house. My master urged, that though I might perhaps succeed in a learned profession, yet the vivacity of my disposition would be an obstacle to my prosperity in a mercantile employment. My father, sensible of the lucrative advantages of an established trade, was deaf to these remonstrances; and on a fatal day I entered into engagements to plod at the desk and the counter for seven years.

"But nature is not to be constrained by indentures. Instead of casting up sums, and measuring ells, I employed my time in the perusal of Shakespeare, in composing epilogues and farces, and in discussing the merits of every new dramatic production. Instead of spending my evenings in posting accounts, and examining my ledger, I was always attending the performances of a Foote or a Garrick. At length, by constantly frequenting the playhouses, and mixing with contemptible sciolists, who called themselves theatrical critics, I became so enamoured of the stage, as to look upon dramatic entertainments as constituting the most import-

ant business, as well as the most agreeable enjoyments, of human life. The shop continually resounded with my rants, in imitation of some favourite actor; and I went so far as to treat with the purchasers of a yard of Irish linen with a theatrical tone and a dramatic action.

"I had so great an opinion of my own talents, that, like the immortal Shakespeare, I was ambitious of shining both as an actor and a writer. Accordingly I finished a comedy with great care and pains, and presented it to one of the managers, who returned it upon my hands with evident marks of contempt. By no means dejected, I was resolved to try my success as an actor. But having, with great difficulty, obtained permission to speak before the managers and a circle of their friends, who seemed to enjoy my distress, I was again rejected.

"Though I could not succeed at the theatres, I was resolved to exert my abilities at spouting and disputing clubs. And here, indeed, I easily made a conspicuous figure, as I had the advantage of a classical education, and most of my competitors had no education at all. The most important topics of religion, learning, and politics, I discussed with more volubility than the gravest prelate, the profoundest academic, or the craftiest statesman. But I triumphed, as it were, without an enemy, and the facility of the conquest diminished the pleasure of it. I soon became weary of dry argumentation, and eagerly panted to wear the buskin, and to mouth the sonorous periods of some tragic bard.

"It happened that I had formed a connexion with a young member of the club, whose genius was entirely similar to my own, and who had been engaged with a strolling company of players. He had often solicited me to go with him on an acting

tour into the north of England, and I had as often refused, from a principle of pride. But, at length, an ardent desire of exhibiting on a stage overcame every regard to duty, and every compunction of conscience. In a fatal hour (I blush to mention it), I embezzled a sum of my father's money, with which I was trusted in the course of business, packed up my clothes, and accompanied a set of vagabonds who, like myself, had abandoned every reputable occupation, and devoted themselves to infamy and indigence, for the sake of enjoying the plaudits of a few rustics assembled in a barn.

"And now commences the æra of all my misery. The money I had fraudulently taken was soon squandered away in a society of thoughtless mortals, who regarded not to-morrow, if they could feast to-day. We were, indeed, received with applause; but the audience was commonly so scanty, that the expenses of representation often exceeded the receipts. In every town we were looked upon with suspicion, and treated as vagrants. We were sometimes reduced to such extremities, by the expenses of travelling, and the losses of acting to empty barns, that we have wanted even food to support nature. Above charity, we could not be relieved; and destitute of credit, we could not be trusted. At length I saw my folly; and, after various resolves, sent to a friend to inquire whether my father was disposed to receive me, should I return and confess my fault. How, alas! was I struck, when I was told in answer, that my father died a few days ago of a broken heart; and that his death was so sudden, that he had not time to alter his will, in which, in the first rage after his discovery of my elopement, he had cut me off with a shilling.

"It is impossible to give you an adequate idea of my grief on this occasion; and I shall only inform

you, that it would have proved fatal, had it not been soon removed by emotions of a different kind. During my indisposition, one of the actresses of our company, whose beauty is only exceeded by the goodness of her heart, watched me with all the anxiety of a parent, and soothed me under the horrors of despair, with the softest blandishments of tenderness. I soon felt a flame kindling in my breast, which was answered with a sympathetic passion. In short, I was no sooner restored to health and vigour, than I married the lovely Emily. We have now been united near a year, and yesterday she was safely delivered of twins. That she is well, thank Heaven; but, alas! the reflection, that I am destitute of all the means that can give her ease, or provide for her offspring, sharpens all the darts of ill fortune, and imbitters every woe."

Here he stopped, and I was obliged to leave him, after having given him an invitation to my house, where I hope to be able to alleviate his misfortunes, without hurting his sensibility. But I cannot help expressing my wish, that all who, deluded by a heated imagination, feel themselves inclined to quit the comforts of a parent and a home in pursuit of a profession which is prohibited by law, and which often entails on its followers misery and disgrace, may avoid his wretchedness by avoiding his misconduct.

NO. CX.—ON THE PLEASURES OF REFLECTION. [IN A LETTER.]

That the enjoyments of the understanding exceed the pleasures of sense, is a truth confessed by all who are capable of exerting the faculties of think-

ing in their full vigour. But by these pleasures are generally understood sublime contemplations on subjects of science and abstruse disquisition; contemplation which can only be the result of uncommon powers and extraordinary efforts.

But there are intellectual pleasures of another kind, to the enjoyment of which neither great abilities nor learning are required. These are no other than the pleasures of reflection, which are open to the illiterate mechanic as well as to the sage philosopher, and afford to a good mind some of the sweetest satisfactions of human life.

There are few who have not felt pleasing sensations arising from a retrospective view of the first period of their lives. To recollect the puerile amusements, the petty anxieties, and the eager pursuits of childhood, is a task in which all delight. It is common to observe, that on no subject do men dwell with such pleasure as the boyish tricks and wanton pranks which they practised at school. The hoary head looks back with a smile of complacency, mixed with regret, on the season when health glowed on the cheek, when lively spirits warmed the heart, and when toil strung the nerves with vigour.

Cicero has remarked, that events the most disagreeable during their immediate influence, give an exquisite satisfaction when their consequences have ceased; and Æneas solaces his companions under the hardships they endured with the consideration, that the remembrance of their sufferings would one day give them satisfaction. That these sentiments are just, is well known to those who have enjoyed the conversation of the soldier. Battles, skirmishes, and sieges, at which, perhaps, he trembled during the action, furnish him with topics of conversation and sources of pleasure for the remainder of his life.

Reflection is the properest employment, and the sweetest satisfaction, in a rational old age. Destitute of strength and vigour necessary for bodily exertions, and furnished with observations by experience, the old man finds his greatest pleasure to consist in wandering in imagination over past scenes of delight, in recounting the adventures of his youth, the vicissitudes of human life, and the public events to which he is proud of having been an eye-witness. Of so exalted a nature are these enjoyments, that theologists have not hesitated to assert, that to recollect a well-spent life is to anticipate the bliss of a future existence.

The professors of philosophy, who will be acknowledged to have understood the nature of true and substantial pleasure better than the busy, the gay, and the dissipated, have ever shown a predilection for privacy and solitude. No other cause have they assigned for their conduct in forsaking society, than that the noise and hurry of the world are incompatible with the exertion of calm reason and dispassionate reflection. The apophthegm of that ancient who said, "he was never less alone than when by himself," is not to be considered merely as an epigrammatic turn. In vain was it to pursue philosophy in the Suburra; she was to be courted with success only in the sequestered shade of rural retirement.

Were the powers of reflection cultivated by habit, mankind would at all times be able to derive a pleasure from their own breasts as rational as it is exalted. To the attainment of this happiness, a strict adherence to the rules of virtue is necessary; for let it be remembered, that none can feel the pleasures of reflection who do not enjoy the peace of innocence.

NO. CXI.—ON SOME INCONVENIENCES WHICH UNAVOIDABLY ATTEND LIVING WRITERS.

The composition of a book has often been compared to the furnishing of a feast, in which, whatever art may have been exerted, and variety produced, it seldom happens that every palate is equally pleased. Sometimes the dishes are not dressed and seasoned as they ought to be; and sometimes the organs of sensation in the guests are languid and indisposed. No work, however excellent, ever yet appeared, which was not blamed, as well as praised, by many; but we hesitate not to pronounce that good which retains, during a considerable time, a majority of suffrages in its favour. Longinus, very reasonably, makes the favourable opinion of various nations, for many ages, an infallible criterion of an author's singular excellence. And it is certain, that to call in question the merits of those books which have long survived their authors, contributes more to disgrace the critic, than to diminish the reputation of the author.

But living writers labour under peculiar disadvantages, not only from the difficulty of arriving at distinction after so many illustrious predecessors, but from the prejudices and the envy of their equals and contemporaries. Men have always felt an inclination to exalt departed genius, not only from a sincere admiration of it, but also with a secret desire to degrade living merit, by introducing an invidious comparison. No one aspires at the distinctions of fortune, or civil honours, without exciting jealousy. It would be therefore unreasonable to suppose, that literary ambition should be exempted from the attendants of all ambition. It aims at pe-

culiar distinction, and must therefore excite peculiar opposition.

There never yet was a moral writer, however sincere, whose life and external manners corresponded, in every respect, with the dignity of his writings, and who did not, in some degree, disappoint those who were led by the admiration of his works to approach his person, and to seek his company and conversation in the ordinary scenes of familiar life. Too high an expectation is usually formed of him; and we do not consider, that in his book we survey only the picture of his mind; a picture, which is usually sullied and deformed by the crazy frame in which it is confined. When he sat down to write, his soul was probably in its proper state; all spiritual, and all contemplative. No sooner has he laid aside his pen, and departed from his library, than he is necessarily engaged in the common pursuits of mankind, and displays, like them, many frailties, and many of those faults which he has very sincerely, and from the fullest conviction, condemned in his moral dissertations. But when a spectator, unacquainted with life, manners, and the inconstancy of the human heart, beholds this difference between the writer's book and his behaviour, he too precipitately and severely indulges his censure, and learns to despise him whom at a distance he admired. Thus are enemies and calumniators multiplied, without any other failings on the part of the injured person than the common imbecilities attendant on the most improved state of human nature. Foibles and errors, which would scarcely be noticed in others, are not only remarked in him, but remembered and related in company as matter of entertainment. Even his sincerity is doubted, and the writer is lowered by the imperfections of the man, though his

imperfections are only the common characteristics of humanity. If he has written against avarice or ambition, and happens, by honest industry or good fortune, to gain money or promotion, he is immediately represented as a hypocrite, notwithstanding he may have a family dependent upon him for support, or may have worn himself out in the service of the public, without seeking or gaining any other emolument than what may afford him an humble and quiet retreat in his old age.

It is not easy to write without sometimes appearing to assume an air of superiority. Moral precepts would often be ineffectual, if they were not enforced in a style which, though by no means dogmatical, is yet in a due degree authoritative. The neighbours and the familiar acquaintance of the moralist, who are accustomed to estimate importance by property, and to judge of the weight of a man's opinions by the weight of his purse, are offended to find him who has not a vote in a county meeting, nor an acre of arable or pasture on the face of the earth, daring to express himself with as much freedom as if he were animated with the consciousness of keeping a pack of fox-hounds, or had considerable influence at the election of a knight of the shire. Nevertheless, if what he writes be true, truth being great, he who is armed with it will certainly prevail. Resistance or contradiction will be ineffectual. Nothing, therefore, remains but ridicule and detraction to sap the fortress which is proof against assault. The writer, therefore, is represented by the neighbouring gentlemen as an oddity, a melancholy recluse, and perhaps a little cracked; both he and his family are pitied by the humane ladies for being perpetually confined to musty books, and total strangers to all true pleasure. Between the sippings of the tea and the dealing of the cards much criticism is displayed,

in which it is not easy to determine which is the more conspicuous—ignorance or ill-nature. It is not uncommon for persons who can hardly write their names, or indite a love-letter without Entick's Spelling Dictionary, to decide on the merit of a celebrated poem, or any other new publication, with all the authority of an Aristotle, or the foolish virulence of a Zoilus. And who, indeed, can controvert a remark, however injudicious or malignant, when it proceeds from lips which add a grace and sweetness to all they utter? And even the veteran virgin may be allowed to console herself in the intervals of scandal with the severity of literary criticism. It must, indeed, be owned, that many lies and false censures on characters are published to the world at the tea- and the card-table; but there is this comfort, that, whenever it is known whence they originate, they are suffered, by all candid and sensible persons, to drop, still-born, from their prolific parents. Yet, sometimes, they struggle into life, and are able to murder many a reputation before their own final extinction.

Every thing excellent is to be paid for at a certain price of inconvenience or difficulty. The calumnies of envy, ignorance, and impertinence, must be sustained by him who endeavours, by worthy means, to procure the esteem of the worthy. He must weigh the praises against the censures, and enjoy the predominant applause, while he neglects the severe remarks of impertinence or ill temper, as trifles light as air. No truth has been more repeatedly uttered, than that nothing in this sublunary state is, in every respect, what we wish it. We must, then, learn to submit to necessity, and turn our attention from our evils to our advantages. After all our complaints, Providence is usually found kind and impartial; and, if we possess but humility and patience, we shall

discover, under our most disagreeable situation, some copious source of placid enjoyment. The ill usage of the world will recoil from the heart which is shielded with faith and innocence, as the billows are reverberated from the rock.

Whatever difficulties or injuries a writer may sustain, he may console himself, if he has always taken the part of truth and virtue, that he has employed the talents which God gave him in a manner at least inoffensive; and that it is probable many, in the great mass of mankind, may possess a kindred spirit, and at some favourable moment may receive pleasure and advantage from his lucubrations, even when he is united with the dust from which he was taken, and become equally insensible to censure or applause.

NO. CXII.—ON THE OBLIGATIONS WHICH LEARNING OWES TO THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

MANY among those who have made the greatest pretensions to learning have professed themselves enemies to Revelation. It is not, indeed, difficult to account for their rejection of a religion which is all humility, and by no means calculated to please such as consider the applause of men as the most valuable object, and who pride themselves on the infallibility of their own intellects. To the bold, the conceited, and the half-learned pretender to philosophy, who is weak enough to think his reason commensurate to every object which falls under its notice, that system which requires the exercise of faith more than of reason, appears, as the Scriptures themselves observe, foolishness. Pride, and a very silly kind of pride, such indeed as arises from narrow views of

things and an ignorance of oneself and of human nature, is commonly the foundation of infidelity.

It is, however, no less ungrateful than foolish and wicked, in the sons of learning, to devote their abilities to the extermination of the national religion. For it is really true, that all the ancient learning which now remains was preserved by some peculiar circumstances attending the propagation of Christianity; and, I believe, it will be thought very probable, that if the ancient languages, and the books written in them, had been entirely lost, the civilised nations of Europe would have still continued in a state of darkness and barbarism. Real superstition would then, indeed, have reigned triumphant; and the philosopher, as he calls himself, who is now writing down Christianity, would have been trembling at witches and goblins, spells and enchantments. He makes use of that very light which has directed his steps in the paths of learning, to discover the most probable means of extinguishing the source of all illumination.

I was led into this train of reflections by the perusal of a charge of a late archdeacon of London, Dr. Jortin, in which he evinces that our Saviour spoke most truly in more senses than one, when he said of himself, "I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD."

When any species of literary industry is considered as a duty founded on religion, care will be taken to preserve it. It might otherwise, from the indolence and infirmity of the human mind, have been lost amidst revolutions, persecutions, distress, and the fury of conquest. In every difficulty, the Christians fled for comfort to their Scriptures, and watched over them with peculiar vigilance. The Septuagint preserved, in the worst times, a knowledge of Greek; and the Latin translations, which were mul-

tiplied with avidity, rescued the Latin language from a total oblivion. Josephus was studied, and therefore preserved by the Christians more carefully than by the Jews; and the necessity of Greek for the understanding of the New Testament caused that language not only to be saved from the ravages of time, but also to be studied with devout attention.

The fathers of the church wrote in Greek during three centuries; and at a time when the Latin language was gradually decaying, the Latin fathers contributed something to its restoration, and wrote as well as their coeval writers among the Pagans, not indeed with Augustan elegance, but still well enough to preserve a skill in the construction and vocabulary of the language.

A considerable knowledge of history, and something of chronology and philosophy, was necessary in studying and defending the Scriptures, even in the earliest ages; and many Christians appeared well skilled in these parts of learning, at a time when they were generally neglected. Religion and conscience operated as a stimulus, when all other motives were insufficient to retard the mind in its swift progress down the declivity of ignorance and degeneracy.

With a view, and solely with a view, to enable ecclesiastics to read and understand the Scriptures, even in the most dismal night of ignorance, there were some places of instruction, in cathedrals and monasteries, in which the embers of literature, if we may venture to use that expression, were preserved from total extinction; in which a spark lay latent, which was one day to relume a light destined to lighten the universe.

The little learning of those unfortunate ages, though it did not enable the persons who possessed

it to taste and understand the beauties of the ancient poets and philosophers, yet gave them some idea of the value of books in general, and enabled them to transcribe, with tolerable accuracy, even what they did not entirely or accurately understand. Thus were those inestimable treasures of all elegant and pleasing knowledge, the old Greek and Latin authors, handed down to happier ages; to those who were able to unlock them, and pour out their riches for the general utility. Nor are we indebted to Christians for the classics only; but also for the Roman law, and the codes of Justinian and Theodosius. Books, which were destroyed by ignorant and angry kings and conquerors, found a safe asylum in religious houses; and even Monkery, which has been justly reprobated as one of the follies of human nature, became, under the direction of Providence, the instrument of many of those blessings which now contribute greatly to the happiness and dignity of an enlightened empire.

The revival of learning, as it is termed, or its emancipation from churches and monasteries, and general diffusion over the world, is greatly owing to the efforts of ecclesiastics. There arose, in the auspicious morning of learning restored, a constellation of polite and profound Christian scholars, whose effulgence has scarcely been outshone by any succeeding luminaries in the literary horizon.

The best scholars of modern times, not only in theology, but in every part of human learning, have been Christian divines. They were led by their pursuit of religious knowledge into the collateral paths of philosophy, philology, and all elegant and useful literature.

It is to the piety of Christians that we owe the venerable foundations of schools and colleges, those institutions, which, though they have often been

perverted, have still kept the light burning like the vestal fire, and handed the torch from one generation to another like the runners in the torch race. It was the love of Christ which taught those towers to rise on the banks of the Cam and the Isis, and planted seminaries of learning, the good old Grammar-schools, in every considerable town throughout the kingdom. But the lamp may sometimes require attention to preserve it from burning dimly, though originally illuminated by religion.

"To the Gospel," says the learned divine who suggested this subject, "and to those who embraced it, are due our grateful acknowledgements for the learning that is at present in the world. The infidels educated in Christian countries owe what learning they have to Christianity, and act the part of those brutes, which, when they have sucked the dam, turn about and strike her."

NO. CXIII.—CURSORY REMARKS ON THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF DR. JORTIN.

THE mind feels a secret complacency in contemplating characters eminent for virtue, learning, and religion; and there are few who are not delighted, as well as instructed, by the praises bestowed on departed merit. Notwithstanding the depravity of human nature, virtue still appears amiable to the vicious, and knowledge to the ignorant. Experience, indeed, seems to confirm the opinion of Plato, that goodness, exclusive of its collateral advantages, is possessed of charms irresistibly captivating.

A review of the life of the late Dr. Jortin, whom I knew when a school-boy, cannot but suggest the most pleasing reflections. As a poet, a divine, a

philosopher, and a man, he served the cause of religion, learning, and morality. There are, indeed, many writers whose reputation is more diffused among the vulgar and illiterate; but few will be found whose name stands higher than Dr. Jortin's in the esteem of the judicious. His Latin poetry (the *Lusus Poetici*) is classically elegant. His discourses and dissertations sensible, learned, and argumentative. His remarks on ecclesiastical history interesting and impartial. His sermons replete with sound sense and rational morality, expressed in a style simple, pure, and perspicuous.

Simplicity of style is a grace, which, though it may not captivate at first sight, is sure in the end to give permanent satisfaction. It does not excite admiration, but it raises esteem. It does not warm to rapture, but it sooths to complacency. Unskilful writers seldom aim at this excellence. They imagine that which is natural and common cannot be beautiful. Every thing in their compositions must be strained, every thing affected: but Dr. Jortin had studied the ancients, and perhaps formed himself on the model of Xenophon. He wrote on subjects of morality; and morality is founded on reason, and reason is always cool and dispassionate. A florid declamation, embellished with rhetorical figures, and animated with pathetic description, may indeed amuse the fancy, and raise a transient emotion in the heart; but rational discourse alone can convince the understanding, and reform the conduct.

The first efforts of genius have commonly been in poetry. Unrestrained by the frigidity of argument and the confinement of rules, the young mind gladly indulges the flights of imagination. Cicero, as well as many other ancient philosophers, orators, and historians, is known to have sacrificed to the

Muses in his earlier productions. Dr. Jortin adds to the number of those who confirm the observation. In his *Lusus Poetici*, one of the first of his works, are united classical language, tender sentiment, and harmonious verse. Among the modern Latin poets, there are few who do not yield to Dr. Jortin. His Sapphics, on the story of Bacchus and Ariadne, are easy, elegant, and poetical. The little ode in which the calm life of the philosopher is compared to the gentle stream gliding through a silent grove, is highly pleasing to the mind, and perfectly elegant in the composition.* The lyrics are indeed all excellent. The poem on the immortality of the soul is an exact imitation of the style of Lucretius. The whole collection is such as would scarcely have disgraced a Roman in the age of an Augustus.

Time, if it cool not the fire of imagination, certainly strengthens the powers of judgement. As Dr. Jortin advanced in life, he cultivated his reason rather than his fancy, and desisted from his efforts in poetry, to exert his abilities in the disquisitions of criticism and theological erudition. His observa-

* Qualis per nemorum nigra silentia,
Vallesque irriguas, et virides domos,
Serpit fons placidus murmure languido,
Secretum peragens iter:

Flexas per patrios circumagens aquas
Paulum ludit agros, et sinuat fugam,
Donec præcipiti jam pede defluus
Miscetur gremio maris.

Talis per tacitam devia semitam
Ætas diffugiat, non opibus gravis,
Non experta fori jurgia turbidi, aut
Palmæ sanguineum decus:

Cumque instant tenebræ et lux brevis occidit,
Et ludo satura et fessa laboribus
Somni frater iners membra jacentia
Componat gelidâ manu.

tions on one of the fathers of English poetry need but to be more generally known, in order to be more generally approved and admired.

Classical productions are rather amusing than instructive. His works of this kind are all juvenile, and naturally flowed from a genius like his, improved by a classical education. These, however, were but preparatory to his higher designs, and soon gave way to the more important inquiries which were peculiar to his profession. His discourses on the Christian religion, one of the first fruits of his theological pursuits, abound with sound sense and solid argument.

His dissertations are equally remarkable for taste, learning, originality, and ingenuity.

His remarks on ecclesiastical history are full of manly sense, ingenious strictures, and profound erudition. The work is highly beneficial to mankind, as it represents, in its proper light, that superstition which disgraced human nature, and gives a right sense of the advantages derived from religious reformation. He every where expresses himself with peculiar vehemence against the infatuation of bigotry and fanaticism. Convinced that true happiness is founded on a right use of the reasoning powers, he makes it the scope of all his religious works to lead mankind from the errors of imagination, and to enforce obedience to the dictates of dispassionate reason.

Posthumous publications, it has been remarked, are usually inferior in merit to those which are published during an author's life. And, indeed, the opinion seems plausible; as it may be presumed, that an author's reason for not publishing his works is a consciousness of their inferiority. The sermons of Dr. Jortin are, however, an exception. Good sense and sound morality appear in them; not, in-

deed, dressed out in the meretricious ornaments of a florid style, but in all the manly force and simple graces of natural eloquence. The same caprice which raises to reputation those trifling discourses which have nothing to recommend them but a prettiness of fancy and flowery language, will again consign them to oblivion; but the sermons of Dr. Jortin will always be read with pleasure and edification.

The transition from an author's writings to his life is frequently disadvantageous to his character. Dr. Jortin, however, when no longer considered as an author, but as a man, is far from being lessened in our opinion. A simplicity of manners, an inoffensive behaviour, an universal benevolence, candour, modesty, and good sense, were his characteristics. Though his genius and love of letters led him to choose the still vale of sequestered life, yet was his merit conspicuous enough to attract the notice of a primate who did honour to episcopacy. Unknown by personal acquaintance, and unrecommended by the solicitation of friends or the interposition of power, he was presented by archbishop Herring to a valuable benefice in London, as a reward for his exertions as a scholar and a divine. Some time after, he became chaplain to a late bishop of London, who gave him the vicarage of Kensington, and appointed him archdeacon of his diocese. This was all the preferment he obtained, nor had he this till he was advanced in life. He did not, however, repine. Thus he speaks of himself:—" Not to his erudition—but to his constant love and pursuit of it—he owes a situation and a station better than he expected, and as good as he ought to desire."

Since the above remarks were written, I have been informed that several of the sermons of Dr. Jortin are translations from the French. He cer-

tainly was a great reader of French divinity; and he confessedly borrowed from it freely. It has been suggested to me, that he was not so remarkable for genius and invention as industry and learning. His poetry, I think, proves that he possessed great genius. Perhaps he overwhelmed it by a multifarious reading of authors who had not much genius, and were therefore not likely to excite it.

I must confess that it is possible I may have adopted the style of panegyric, from having known a little of this learned man personally, and beheld him, when I was a boy, with reverence. But my opinion of him is confirmed by the best judges, and by public fame.

NO. CXIV.—ON THE UNION OF EXTRAVAGANCE IN TRIFLES AND VICE, WITH PARSIMONY IN ALL THE TRULY HONOURABLE, USEFUL, AND NECESSARY EXPENSES.

No appearance in the moral world is more remarkable than that combination which is often observed in the same character, of avarice with profusion, of meanness with liberality. Vanity, selfishness, and a want of serious principles, are striking circumstances in the manners of the present age; and as vanity leads to expensive ostentation, so selfishness and want of principle have a natural tendency to produce covetousness and rapacity. Very few restraints are allowed to operate on the modes of acquiring or of saving money, except the fear of detection, shame, and loss. There is scarcely any meanness or baseness to which many persons who make the greatest show in dress, furniture, and equipage, are not ready to submit, under the cer-

tainty of concealment. But the meanness of avarice is most visible in public life, in the venality and servility of giving suffrages at elections and in the senate.

The time has been, when a great family residing in a great house of a village was considered as a blessing to all the neighbouring country. The poor were employed in adorning and improving the grounds all about it. The table in the parlour was always open for the reception of the gentlemen who resided within ten miles of the house; and the kitchen afforded warmth and plenty to the poor and industrious tenant or labourer. The rich man resided in the house of his fathers, and spent his money among those who earned it for him by the sweat of their brows. But, according to the modern system of fashionable manners, such a kind of life would be deemed intolerably dull, as well as antiquated and vulgar. The family, therefore, spend as little time as possible at the noble seat of their ancestors, but hasten to the sea-side, or the watering-places, where they hire a little hut or cabin, and lavish their money on strangers, with few returns of gratitude, or of rational satisfaction. The farmer, who lives in their native village, returning weary from his plough, shakes his head as he passes the cold kitchen, and turns with pity and contempt from the smokeless roof. The servants are pinched, and even envy the comparative plenty and independence of the next cottagers. The whole country rings with reports of the meanness and poor living at the great house. In the mean time, the lord and lady, the baronet or 'squire, with their respective families, are figuring, as it is called, in all the profusion of emulous extravagance, yet often with the most parsimonious meanness, at Bath or Brighthelmstone. While they grudge the bread and cheese

which is consumed in their own houses, or refuse to contribute to a brief, or any charitable institution among their poor neighbours at home, they subscribe most liberally to every fashionable folly and amusement. They give feasts to strangers whom they shall never see any more, and whose principal recommendation is, that they appear, from their external splendour, not to want assistance. Their vanity is gratified in seeing the great and the rich at their table, especially when useful connexions may be made; and what signifies it, they think, if the wretches at home, the tenantry, whom nobody knows, starve and rot on the dunghills whence they originated.

It is easy to observe persons of this description, who will not hesitate to expend many hundreds in dress alone, but who, when a book is praised in their presence, will spare no trouble in finding somebody of whom they may *borrow* it; alleging, in excuse, that books are so dear, it is impossible to buy every thing that comes out. The price of the book shall be a few shillings, and it shall contain amusement for many weeks; and yet they will not buy it, because it would be extravagant; though they will not scruple to expend three guineas, any night in the week, for three hours' pastime in a party at the public places of diversion. The milliners', the hairdressers', the perfumers' bills, shall amount to many hundreds a year; but five pounds expended at the bookseller's would be downright prodigality. Guineas flow, without restraint, in subscriptions to balls, concerts, assemblies; to dancing-masters, music-masters, and to players; but when the parish lecturer's book is brought, or the Marine Society, or the Magdalen, or the Infirmary, or the Prisoners for Small Debts, are recommended as fit objects to receive their superfluities, they immediately look

grave, complain that taxes rise and rents fall; and assert, with an unfeeling heart, that these are not times to admit of any expenses which are not absolutely necessary. Besides, they must save for the approaching general election.

The education of their children ought certainly to constitute one of the first cares of the rich, and no reasonable expense should be withheld in the accomplishment of it. But there are many great families in which this is one of the smallest articles of annual expenditure. The butler is better paid than the tutor.

Indeed, in all necessary and laudable expenses a degree of frugality is displayed which approaches to extreme meanness and parsimony. The poor tradesmen who supply the ordinary articles of domestic consumption are not only denied their price, but, after every abatement, are obliged to wait an unreasonable time for their money. So far are such persons from possessing an inclination to be generous, that it grieves them to be just. But though they who furnish commodities without which life cannot be supported, are ill-used and defrauded, whoever can supply any circumstances of dress, equipage, and luxury, by which selfishness and personal vanity may be gratified, are profusely and immediately rewarded. Men of letters, or ingenuity in the professions, are kept at a distance; but the door is always open to players, and to signiors and signioras. Chaplains and tutors are out of fashion, or rewarded at the public expense; but their place is abundantly supplied by fiddlers, pipers, caperers, and scaramouches. A dancing- or music-master, who can enable the young ladies to display a fine finger or a fine foot, is immediately considered as the best friend of the family, made a companion, invited to the table, paid extravagantly, and com-

plimented with thanks and presents; neither is it wonderful if the young ladies fall in love with these fine gentlemen and marry them; since they appear, both in their own and their parents' eyes, to possess the summit of all human excellence. As to the person who may be employed to form their minds, he is usually engaged from the recommendation of cheapness, and is, for the most part, made an object of ridicule, because he has not the agility of a Noverre and Gallini.

An enormous fortune, considered in its true light, is a sacred trust, and intended to promote not only the happiness of its possessor, but of all with whom he is connected, and who deserve his beneficence. The time has been, when the poor were thought to have a claim upon that superfluity which is now lavished on the mean ministers to luxury, vice, and vain ostentation. We read on the tablets in our churches, and in the records of all charitable foundations, that people of the highest fashion were of opinion, that to be good and bountiful was essential to the character of true gentility. But now, if we were to ask the representative of a rich family where he had bestowed the superfluities of the last year, he might answer, that he had deposited some share of it in the pocket of an Italian, who had the extraordinary merit of being able to stand longer on one leg than the rest of the two-legged and unfeathered race. He might answer, that he had lost it at the gaming-table; spent it in the tavern and brothel; sported it away at Newmarket; lavished it on dogs, horses, jockeys; and left the poor and the deserving to the care of Providence.

That Providence, whose blessings he abuses and perverts, seldom fails to punish his ingratitude; for as all his external circumstances have more of show than of solidity, so also have all his boasted enjoy-

ments, and all that happiness which he thinks to derive from riches, independently of their proper application. VIRTUE and BENEFICENCE alone, can support the privileged orders with honour and permanency.

NO. CXV.—ON A TASTE FOR THE CULTIVATION OF FLOWERS, AND OF BEAUTIFUL SHRUBS AND TREES.

BEAUTY of every kind is formed to allure; and there is this peculiar advantage in contemplating the beauties of vegetable nature, that we may permit our hearts to be captivated by them, without apprehension of any dangerous or dishonourable servitude. A taste for the beauties of vegetation is the mark of a pure and innocent mind, and, at the same time, one of the best preservatives of purity and innocence. It diverts the attention from the turbulent scenes of folly, and superinduces a placid tranquillity highly favourable to the gentler virtues, and to the permanency of our most refined enjoyments.

I have often been surprised to find those who possessed a very acute susceptibility of artificial or literary grace, and were powerfully affected by the beauties of a poem, a piece of sculpture, or a painting, not at all more sensible of the charms of a tree or a floweret than a common and inelegant spectator. They have dwelt with rapture on a fine description of the Vale of Tempe, they have entered into all the delight which a Shakespeare or a Milton meant to communicate in their enchanting pictures of flowery and sylvan scenes, and yet can walk through a wood, or tread on a bed of violets and primroses, without appearing to be affected with any peculiar pleasure. This is certainly the effect of a

superficial judgement; for there is no truth of which philosophers have been longer convinced, than that the realities of nature infinitely surpass the most perfect productions of imitation.

The beauty of colour, though justly esteemed subordinate to that of shape, is yet found to delight the eye more immediately and more universally. When colour and shape are united in the works of nature, he who can view them with insensibility must resign all pretensions to delicacy of perception. Such a union has been usually effected by nature in the formation of a flower.

There is scarcely a single object, in all the vegetable world, in which so many agreeable qualities are combined as in the queen of flowers,—the rose. Nature certainly meant to regale the senses of her favourite with an object which presents to him at once freshness, fragrancy, colour, and shape. The very soul seems to be refreshed on the bare recollection of the pleasure which the senses receive in contemplating, in a fine vernal morning, the charms of the pink, the violet, the honeysuckle, the hyacinth, the narcissus, the jonquil, the rocket, the tulip, and a thousand others, in every variety of figure, scent, and hue. Nature is no less remarkable for the accuracy and beauty of her works, than for variety and profusion. Defects are always discovered in the works of art when they are examined with a microscope; but a close examination of a leaf of a flower is like taking off a veil from the face of beauty. The finest needle ever polished, and pointed by the most ingenious artist, appears, when it is viewed by the solar microscope, quite obtuse; while the sting of a bee, however magnified, still retains all its original acuteness of termination. The serrated border in the petal of a flower, and the fringe on the wing of a fly, display an accuracy of deline-

ation which no pencil ever yet could rival. The taste of the florist has not, indeed, been generally aspired at in the circles of fashion; while that of the connoisseur in painting is considered as a mark of elegance of character, and an honourable distinction. Yet surely it is an inconsistency to be transported with the workmanship of a poor mortal, and to feel no raptures in surveying those highly finished pictures, in which it is easy to trace the finger of Omnipotence.

The poets have given us most luxuriant descriptions of gardens and of rural scenery; and, though they are thought by some to have exceeded reality, they have indeed scarcely equalled it. Enter a modern shrubbery formed of a selection of the most agreeable flowering shrubs, and consider, whether there is any thing in the garden of Alcinous, in the fields of Elysium, in Milton's Paradise, to be compared with the intermixture of the lilac, the syringa, the laburnum, the double-blossomed cherry, peach, and almond; with the rubinia, the jessamine, the moss-rose, the magnolia, and a great number of others, less common, but not of greater though perhaps of equal beauty. As we walk under clusters of flowers white as snow, tinged with gold, purple as the grape, blue as the expanse of heaven, and blushing like the cheek of youth, we are led to imagine ourselves in fairy land, or in another and better world, where every delicate sense is delighted, and all around breathes fragrance and expands beauty, while the heart seems to participate in the joy of laughing nature. Groves and gardens have, indeed, been always supposed to sooth the mind into a placid temper peculiarly favourable to the indulgence of contemplation.

The excellent taste which now prevails in gardening usually combines the shrubbery and the grove.

The tall trees of the forest constitute the back-ground in the living landscape, and the shrubs, beneath and before them, form the underwood, in a delightful resemblance to the natural coppice and the uncultivated forest. The plane-tree is one of the first beauties among these which are now most frequently planted in our gardens. Its large leaf and permanent verdure render it peculiarly fitted to afford a shade. I always consider it as a classical tree, for the ancient writers often mention it; and some of the finest philosophical dialogues of antiquity passed under the cool retreat of its broad and vivid foliage. Socrates sought no other theatre than the turf that grew under the plane-tree on the banks of the Ilissus. The weeping-willow that droops over the babbling stream constitutes one of those fine beauties which partake of the melancholy and romantic. Such, indeed, are the charms of its luxuriant branches, that, when properly situated, it is of itself an enchanting image. Beautiful as are all the features of the modern garden, I should not hesitate to allot the first place in an estimate of horticultural graces to the weeping-willow. The pendant birch is at all times pleasing, and a most delightful object in winter. Observe yonder tall stem, rising from the interstices of a craggy rock, covered with a rind white and glossy like silver, and drooping with ten thousand fine twigs, so attenuated as to appear almost capillary. View it when sprinkled with hoar frost, or with snow, and, if you have a soul capable of being charmed with natural beauty, you will be sensibly affected at the sight with a sweet complacency. An old oak is not often found in our gardens, because of its tardy vegetation; but whenever it appears in them, it produces all the effect of graceful majesty, and one may contemplate it for hours with still new delight. The delicate acacia,

the conical poplar of Lombardy, the flowery chesnut, the soft lime, the elegant mountain ash, the aspiring fir, the glossy laurel, these all form so various and delightful pictures, that while I am permitted to expatiate over the lawn, and penetrate the mazes of the wood and garden, I shall not repine that the distance of my rural retreat may prevent me from sauntering in the picture-galleries of a palace. Nature shall be my painter, and yonder hill my picture-gallery.

The taste for plantation prevails greatly in this country, and it ought to be encouraged, as it is a never-failing source of pleasure to the planter, and of improvement to the community. But it is to be hoped, that, while we plant the tree for ornament, we shall not forget to drop the acorn into the bosom of the earth, and raise that heart of oak, which bears an analogy to the bravery of the people, and has ever been to this land both a bulwark and a beauty.

NO. CXVI.—ON THE CHARACTER OF ADDISON AS A POET. [IN A LETTER.]

The lustre of a great name not only sets off real beauties to the greatest advantage, but sometimes adds a grace to deformity, and converts a defect to an excellence. The enthusiastical admirers of a favourite author, like ardent lovers, view those objects with rapture which cause in others indifference or disgust. Without considering the inequalities of the same genius at different times, and the diversities of subjects which he treats, they are led to conclude, from the excellence of one part of an author's works, that all are excellent, and that what-

ever bears his signature is genuine wit and just taste.

I know not whether even Mr. Addison, who is so deservedly esteemed the honour of our nation, was not indebted for a smalll part of his reputation to the blind bigotry of prejudice. On any other supposition, I know not how he could have been admired as a very eminent poet. The dispassionate temperature which constituted a solid judgement, and qualified him for the cool disquisitions of criticism and morality, rendered him incapable of that animated spirit which is the soul of poetry. But the reader is unwilling to believe that so accurate a critic, and so correct a writer, is himself faulty; and therefore, when he passes from his prose to his poetry, and observes a manifest inferiority and deficiency of merit in the latter, he rather inclines to distrust his own judgement than the abilities of the author. Reader after reader has toiled through the same dull rhymes, perhaps blind to their faults, or, if sensible of their defects, yet inclined to join in their praise, in opposition to conviction, from a dread of the imputation of a depraved taste. Had not a veneration for his name prevented critics from speaking their real sentiments, though Addison would, as a moral essayist, most justly have been called the Socrates, Plato, or Xenophon of his age, yet he would never have been esteemed one of the first of poets. He seldom rises above mediocrity.

It would be injustice, while we inspect the poetical volumes of Addison, to pass over in silence the elegant poem which is prefixed, on the death of their author, by Tickell. The melancholy flow of the verse is well adapted to express the tenderness of the sentiments. The beauty of its imagery and the force of its expression entitle this little piece to a

very respectable rank among the elegiac compositions of the English writers. It was for a long time little regarded; but the attention lately paid to it, and the commendations bestowed on it, are proofs that literary merit, however unnoticed for a time, through accident, prejudice, or party, is sure to receive the applause it deserves from impartial posterity.

At the end of the verses of Addison to Mr. Dryden, we are told that the author was but twenty-two years of age when he wrote them. Whether the age was affixed to extenuate the imperfections, or to enhance the merits of the poem, certain it is, that both these intentions are frustrated by its extreme insignificance and futility. The production is unworthy the age of twenty-two. Mr. Pope is known to have written his pastorals, which infinitely exceed the versification of Addison, at sixteen; and Milton acquired an elegance in Latin verse at an earlier period. The thoughts in this piece are not striking; the style is contemptible; and the negligence in the rhyme alone would, in the present refinement of taste, consign the work to oblivion.

That all his pieces are upon a level with this, cannot be asserted. That some of them abound with grand conceptions, and have many good lines, must be confessed. But, allowing Addison all the merit in his poetry which candour, or even partiality in his favour, can allow, he never can be justly esteemed one of the first poets of the nation. I never heard that Socrates increased his fame by his poetical version of Æsop's Fables, and the best prose-writer in the best age of Rome wrote the line *O fortunatam, natam, me consule, Romam.* The truth is, nature usually bestows her gifts with a prudent liberality even to her favourites. One might on this occasion apply to Addison the passage of Martial,

Hoc Ciceronis habes. This character of a bad poet you have in common with the great Cicero.

To oppose opinions universally received, is to incur the imputation of vanity, ignorance, and want of taste. But, as every individual has a right to private judgement, and may offer his sentiments to others, while he does it with modesty, professes the possibility of mistake, and keeps his mind open to conviction, I have ventured to advance an opinion against the poetical merit of Addison; regardless how it may alarm those who submit their judgements to the direction of others, and who pay an implicit obedience to the despotism of critical authority.

END OF VOL. II.

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